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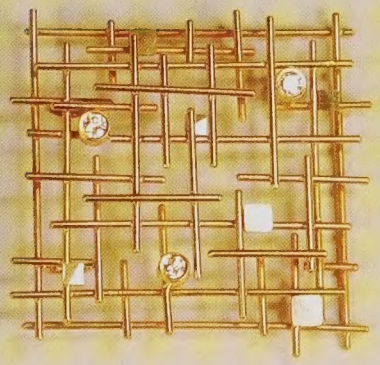

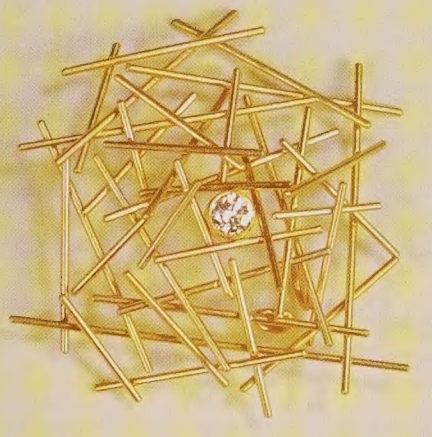

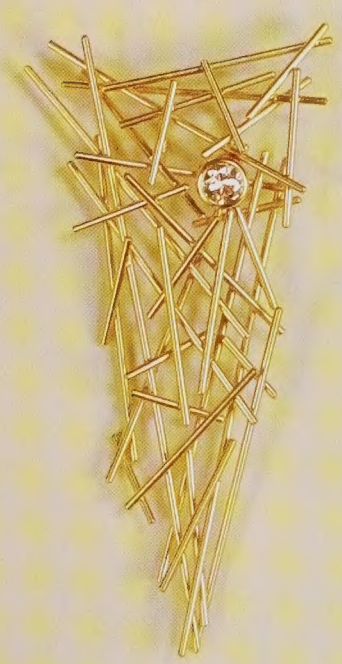

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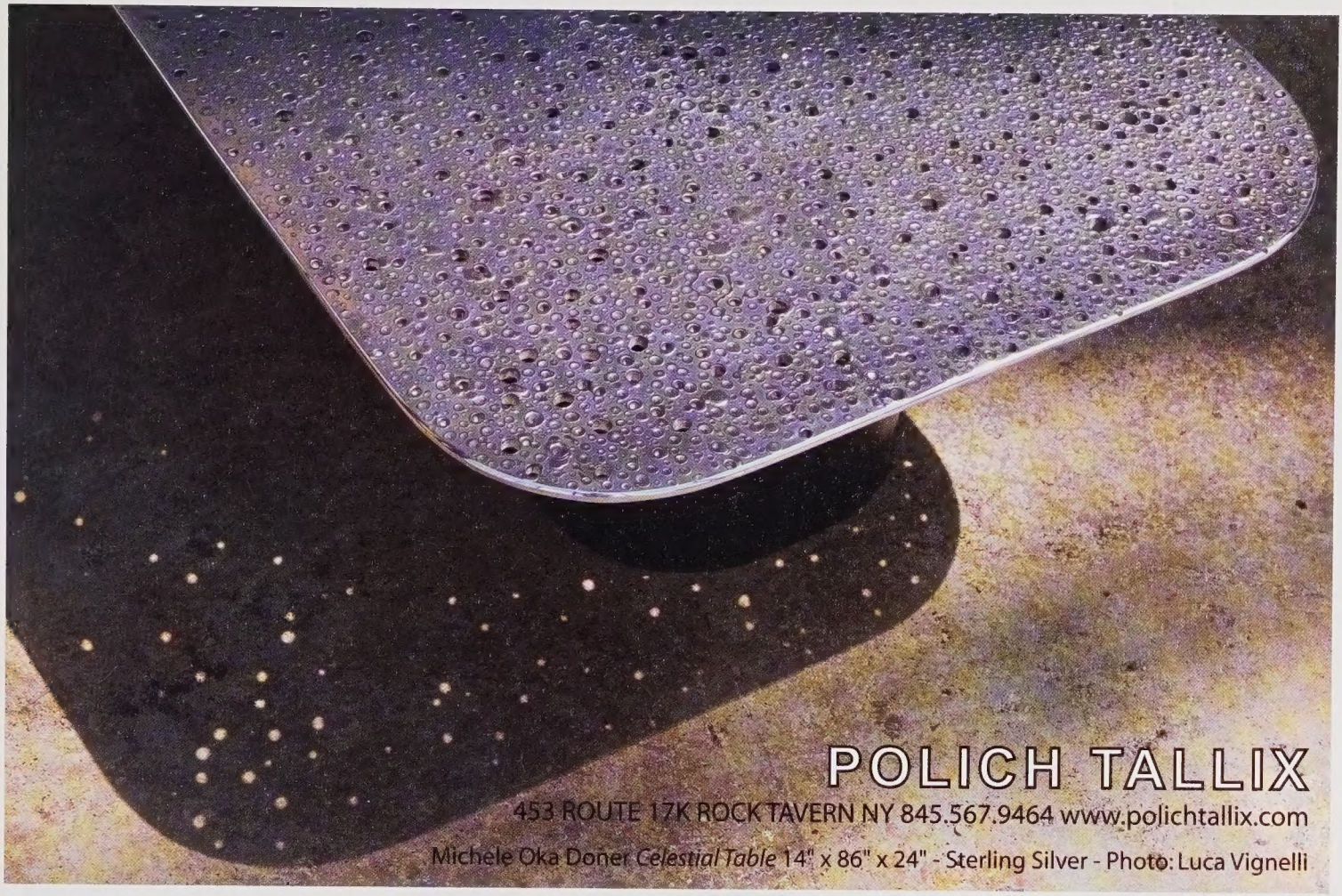
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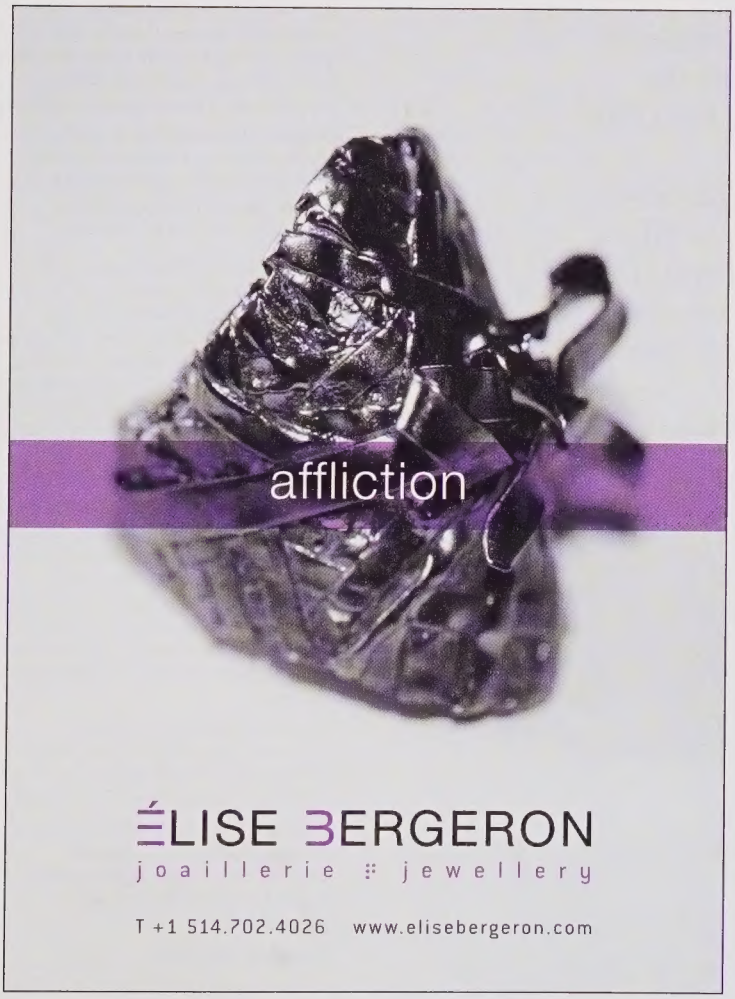
Michele Oka Doner *Celestial Table* 14" x 86" x 24" - Sterling Silver - Photo: Luca Vignelli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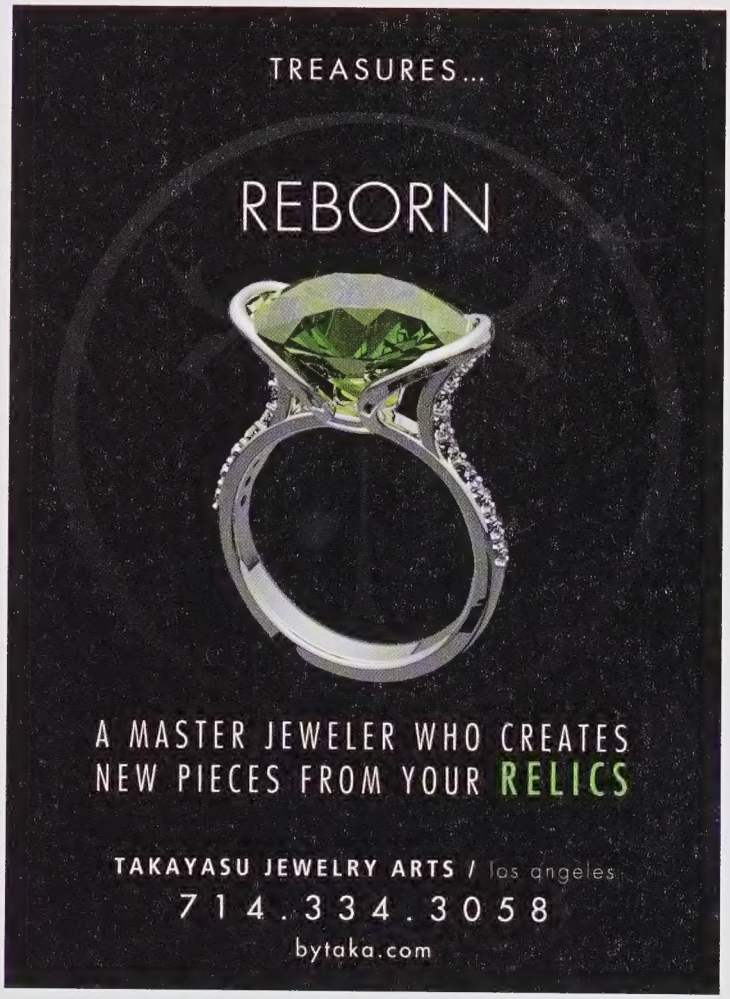
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FOREWORD

AN APT SUBTITLE for this issue of *Metalsmith* could be "Back to the Future." Like the lead character in that popular 1985 movie, several artists included here are going back in history to find a stronger future direction.

Two of the feature articles focus on the rebirth of ornament within current metalsmithing practice. In "Mining the Past: Ornamentalism Revisited," the co-authors contemplate the widespread resurgence of decorative motifs in art and design, finding that artists are "looking backwards to look forward." Surveying contemporary permutations of traditional ornament, they note an array of new approaches, including fragmentation, abstraction, effacement, altered sites, and new technologies.

For the past decade Linda Threadgill has staged a one-woman interrogation into the limits and qualities of ornament with her finely wrought vessels. Her investigation has also tackled the prime relationship between ornament and utilitarian form. "I'm no longer interested in utility," states Threadgill, "except symbolically." Indeed, Threadgill's latest work launches an ornamental assault on the supporting structure.

Michele Oka Doner, the subject of our feature titled "Artist of Essence," has always looked back to basic natural phenomena and processes for creative impetus. Her range of subjects encompasses everything from astronomy to amoebas, seeds to sea coral. "I am working with earth, air, fire, literally all the time," Oka Doner affirms, as she draws upon essential materials and mysteries to fuel her strikingly expansive work.

Similarly, Art Nouveau jewelry (spotlighted in our "Reviews" section), was rooted in the imagery of flora and fauna. In effect, this "new art" movement was born from the most prehistoric of subject matter. Following nature, Art Nouveau artists were also intent on producing a harmonious totality of the arts, delivering an experience that was innovatively primal.... m

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

metalsmith

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Metalsmith's mission: to document, analyze, and promote excellence in studio jewelry and metalsmithing.

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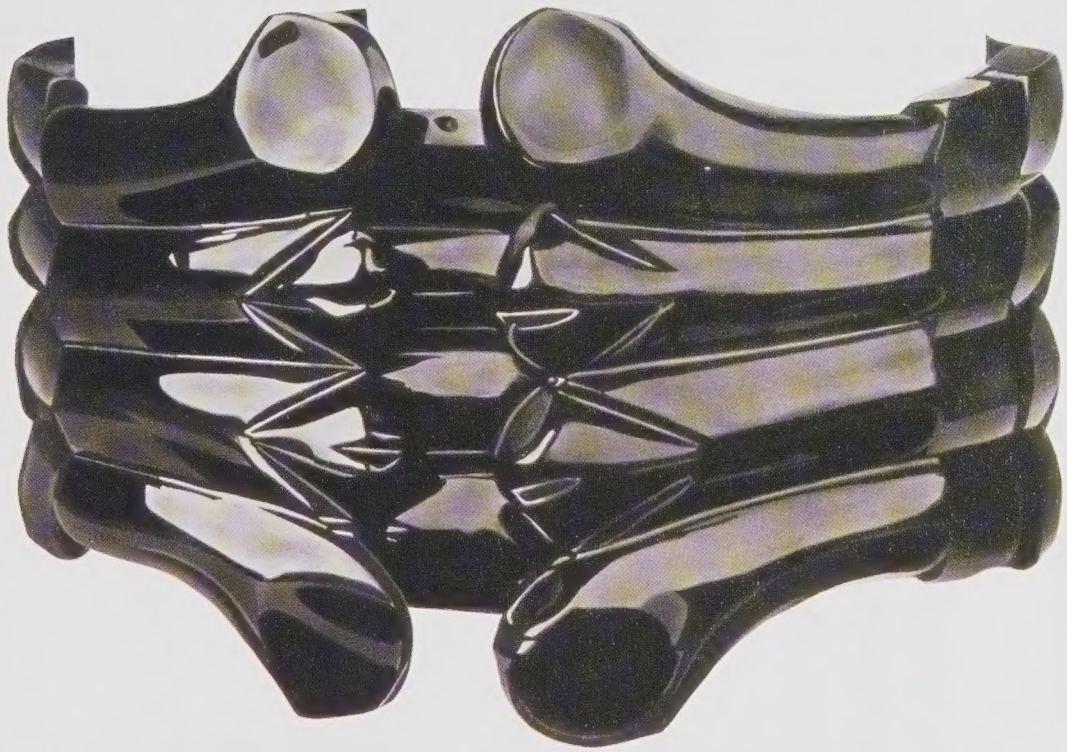

Jonathan Wahl *Jet Drawing: Darth Vader's Mouthpiece* 2009 charcoal on paper 32" x 48"

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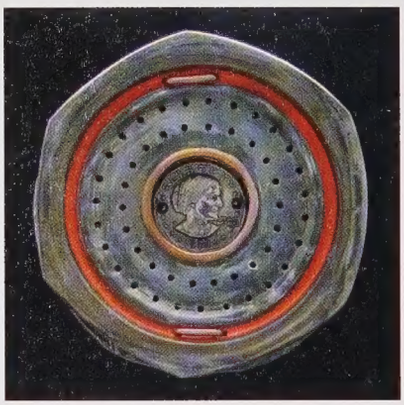

J.F. Woell *STAR POWER, 2001 Mixed Media brooch 3" x 3" x 3/8"* • ***Devta Doolan*** *"Regal Jasper Necklace" 2009* • ***J.F. Woell*** *AMERICAN MISS, 2005 found object brooch 3 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 1"*

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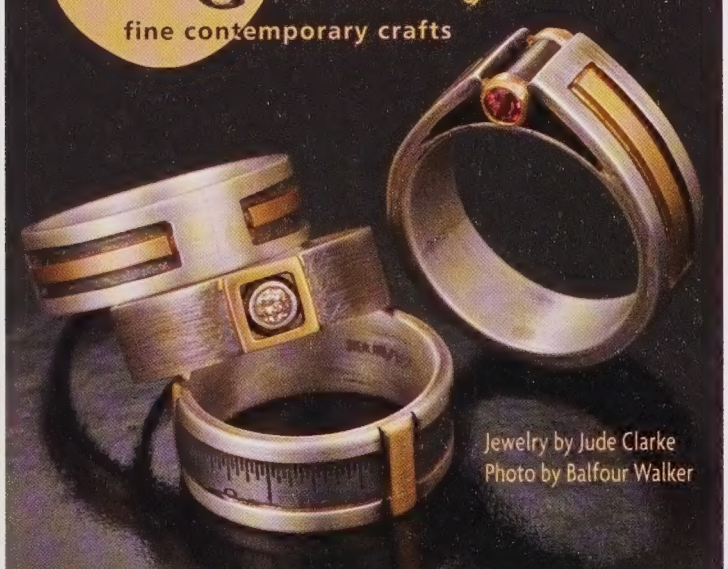

Jewelry by Jude Clarke
Photo by Balfour Walker

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Symbiotic Realms

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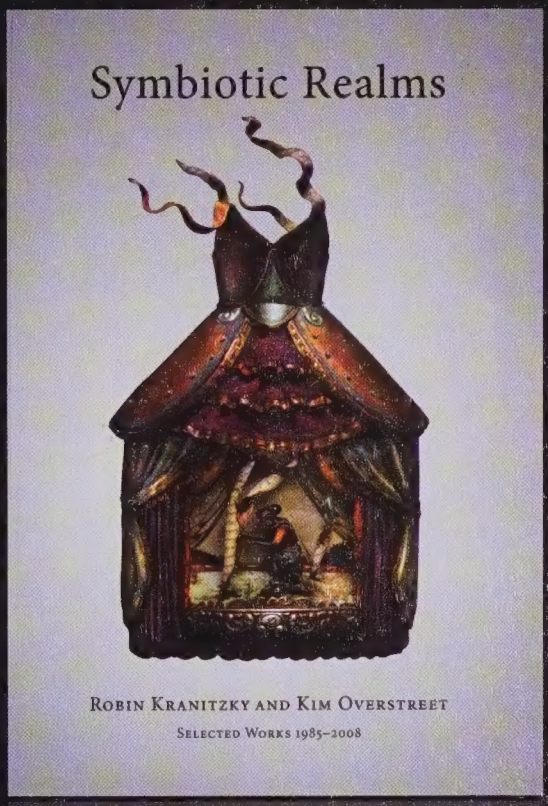

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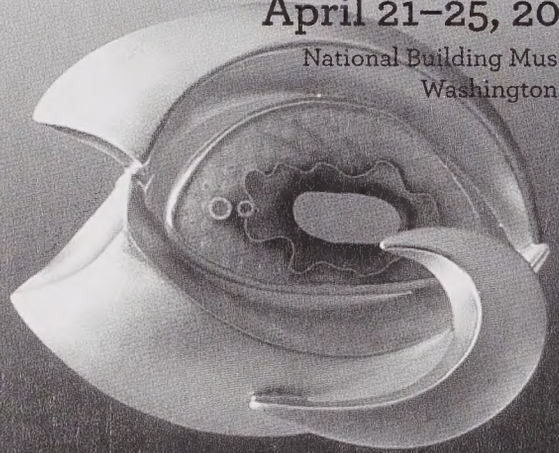

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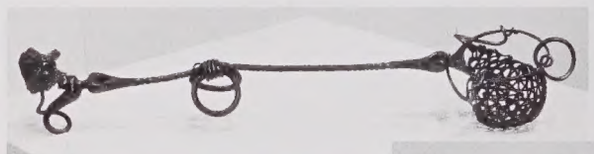

Roberta Elliot, *Dysfunctional Spoon: Bird Nest*, 2007

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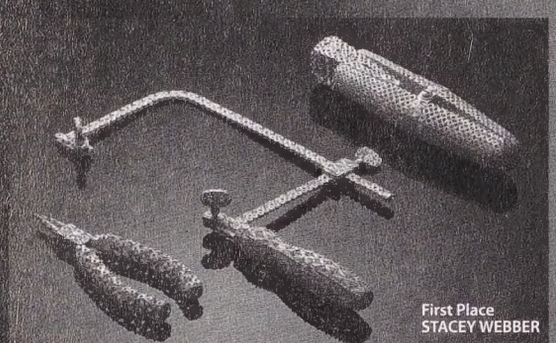

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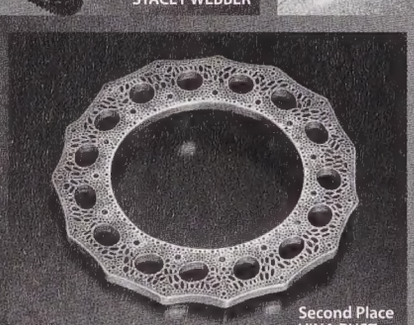
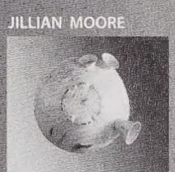
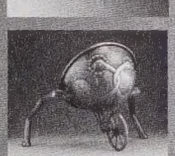


Second Place
VINA RUST

JILLIAN MOORE





MEIL-MARGARITA PAREDES

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SECOND PLACE, Hauser & Miller Award– Vina Rust
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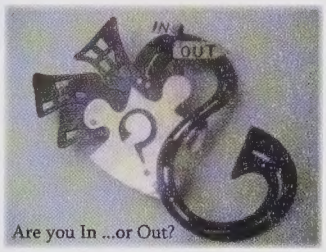

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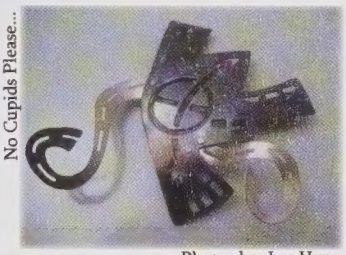

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Stayin' Alive

In spite of hard times, the urge to adorn lives on

ANDREA DINOTO

WHEN THE ECONOMY tanks, a Cartier tank watch could save your bacon. At least that's one of many messages emanating from the often schizophrenic jewelry world, where current financial reversals have curbed impulse spending (we're told) but spurred both the sell-off and buying of important jewels and watches. The quest for exclusivity, quality, and authenticity—fewer but better items—drives the major luxury consumer trends of 2009, according to Forbes.com. As if on cue, the luxe French jeweler Boucheron chose this recessionary moment to open a private salon in New York, where the super-rich may discreetly purchase one-of-a-kind items by appointment only. At the same time, the house has launched a more proletarian online store, with prices ranging from $400 to $56,000.

Back in the frigid days of January, as this column was being written, gloomy reports of the effect of the economic downturn on holiday jewelry sales—high and low—were just beginning to roll in. Double-digit declines for 80 percent of jewelers were reported—even Tiffany & Co. saw sales decline 21 percent—but at Saks Fifth Avenue, the jewelry category held strong against a 19.8 percent overall sales drop for the five weeks ending January 3. In addition, an in-depth analysis of recent major jewelry auctions by the ASJRA online newsletter revealed that "private [as opposed to trade] buyers and jewelry collectors made a strong showing... a sign that the market has both depth and strength."

In another view of the credit crunch fallout, *The New Yorker* magazine's January 12 issue ran an account of how deep-pocketed victims of the Bernard Madoff financial scandal—particularly in places like Palm Beach and Beverly Hills—were quietly selling their pricey baubles to the jewelry resale firm Circa, which kindly sends Brinks trucks to collect the bling. Pawn shops were also reported busy, as customers brought in gold in exchange for short-term loans to weather personal and business-related crises.

Reports from the art jewelry front were also mixed. Patricia Faber, of the Aaron Faber Gallery in New York, which sells both estate and art jewelry and vintage watches, observed that "at the end of the year, everybody put on the brakes," but that sales improved "in the new year." Faber felt that while it was too soon to discern real trends for 2009, she expected to see more silver

JAN MANDEL
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FROM THE "FRESH START" EXHIBITION AT AARON FABER GALLERY

Riviera Diamond Necklace, 19th century
silver-on-gold, diamonds
FROM THE JEWELRY-BUYING FIRM CIRCA

KAROLA TORKOS
Earrings from the "Fools Gold" series, 2008
plastic, silver
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PHOTO: SYLVAIN DELEU

and mixed metals sales as less expensive alternatives to gold, and predicted "a simpler esthetic at a lower price point" may take hold. "The price of gold and silver influences artists," she added, forcing many of them to move into alternative materials. "Art jewelry is a little insulated from the market," Faber added, pointing out that the gallery had sold a number of pieces from its first 2009 exhibition, "Fresh Start: New Directions."

Although online jewelry sales fell 24 percent overall in January, not every business was adversely affected. Whitney Couch, a partner in ObjectFetish.com, which represents 76 artists worldwide, said her return customers were buying, although works by "artists they know," and items "more classic than far out, one-of-a-kind pieces." But Melissa Joy Manning, whose San Francisco studio produces her designs for sale both through her own web site and at 200 retail outlets (including Barneys Co-op), reported that because her high-end limited edition and one-of-a-kind pieces "are still so affordable they are really selling," while there is less activity in what she calls "disposable" (i.e. trendy, less expensive) jewelry. Go figure.

Now, several months into the downturn, we wonder: Have buyers cashed in gold chains for colorful resin necklaces, or are they seeking relief from economic pain via the anodyne properties of colored stones, evil-eye charms, or even the New Age technology proffered by the firm Equilibrio, whose chip-embedded pendants promise energy enhancement on the cellular level? At New York's Rubin Museum of Art store, which sells jewelry by Himalayan peoples, manager Sherab Norrpa reported that "so far we have been really very lucky," with steady sales of pieces in silver, semiprecious stones, and even brightly colored felt. "People love colors," she said. Which leads us to go out on a limb with this prediction: Trends come and go, but jewelry, well-made, imaginative, bright and beautiful, is forever.

Have buyers cashed in gold chains for colorful resin necklaces, or are they seeking relief from economic pain via the anodyne properties of colored stones and evil-eye charms.

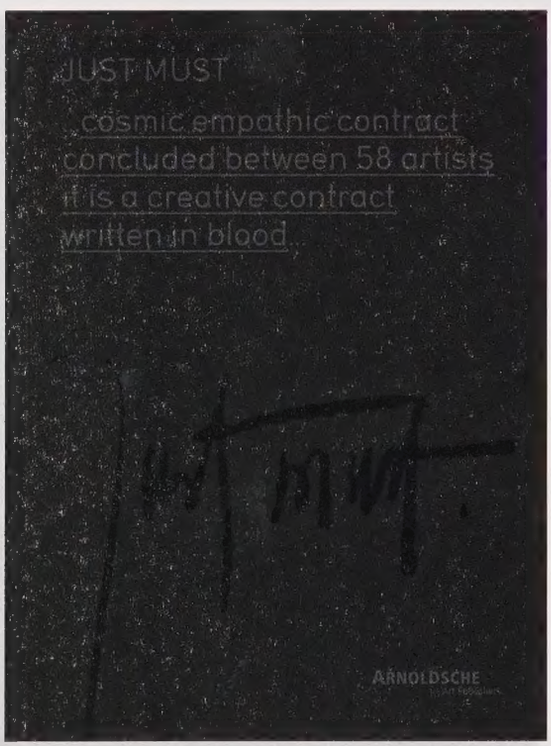
Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer on the arts and design.

Just Must
Honoring black in all its complex glory

KADRI MÄLK, EDITOR
ARNOLDSCHE ART PUBLISHERS, STUTTGART, 2008
BY LIESBETH DEN BESTEN

JUST MUST, a substantial book with a black dust jacket printed in black, arrived by post from Estonia together with a black handkerchief embroidered with the title. That handkerchief—a strange gesture in combination with a book—had a dandy-like air of decadence and luxury. It seemed to suggest a dark, bleak outlook, but the book's interior turned out to be more hopeful than gloomy.

Just Must is not a typical exhibition catalogue, although it accompanied an international jewelry art exhibition at the Estonian History Museum, in the Medieval Great Guild House in Tallinn. A composition of images, graphics, documentation, and essays (by four authors, and some anonymous short texts), the book bears the character of a portrait of the compiler and curator of the exhibition, Kadri Mälk. Mälk's essay *Finally* is a personal statement, and the two pages filled with copies from an e-mail correspondence about a lost ring of Karl Fritsch are hilarious and revealing, especially when Mälk describes how she ended up performing magical rituals after many days of rational research. *Just Must* (this strange imperative means "black and nothing else" in Estonian) is an exhibition about black and all its connotations; to me it was no surprise that this theme emerged in Estonia.



The Republic of Estonia, in the Baltic region in Northern Europe, is one of the smallest countries in the European Union, with only 1.4 million inhabitants (25 percent of whom are Russian). It has been continuously conquered and ruled by many different people and countries, from the Teutons, to the Danes, Swedes (1561–1721) and Russians (1721–1917). Estonia only had a short period of independence after World War I, which was cut short by the occupation by the Soviet Union at the start of World War II, and subsequently by the Third Reich. In 1944, the Soviets reoccupied Estonia, and the country remained part of the communist alliance until August 1991.

So Estonia has only enjoyed independence for the past 17 years. The country and people have been the plaything of history for centuries, but the Estonian identity is strong. Although Estonian is a Finnic language (most European languages have an Indo-European origin), no Finn can actually read, talk, or understand it. Though the country is isolated, the Estonians are very well oriented internationally.

The Estonian "school" of jewelry is bound by a certain work attitude, a certain style, content, and atmosphere. It has to do with magic, with massive walls and dusky vaults, with rituals, myths, and mystery. This "school" is related to an actual school, the Estonian Academy of the Arts (initially a School of Arts and Crafts) in Tallinn, and its metal department dates to the 1920s. Under Leili Kuldkepp (1989–95) a new era started; her interest in Finno-Ugric cultures led to work that contained ethnographic-mythological topics. Kuldkepp's former student Kadri Mälk succeeded her, and under her lead Estonian jewelry has become more internationally oriented. She has organized different exhibitions of contemporary jewelry, with "Nocturnus" (2001) as its very highlight.

"Just Must" is a natural successor to "Nocturnus." But the dreamlike and romantic character of the previous show was replaced by a more aesthetic and lyrical approach. The group of artists in this book should be observed as a whole, as Mälk writes: "This cosmic emphatic contract concluded between 58 artists (...) is a creative contract written in blood. We stick together—and this is good to experience in today's world." This statement sets

The jewelers in this book are perfectly capable of dealing with the many variations of black; it can be soft and deep like velvet, dusky and shimmering, or pitch-dark, disorienting or twinkling like the firmament; it can be chic and shiny, or old, worn out, and disgusting.

the tone for the book. *Just Must* is not an academic study, nor an art historical survey (although there is an essay by art historian Krista Kodres discussing the question whether contemporary jewelry is art)—and anyone who expects that will find the book wanting. It is as if the makers of the book tried to escape from the realities of fact and time; there are no dates to peg down the genesis of a work or the birth of an artist. It makes the content a bit airy, the jewels floating in a vacuum—an impression that is intensified by the graphic design.

In physics, black of course is the absence of color. A short text in the book reports on scientific research that resulted in the production of the world's darkest color, which absorbs more than 99.9 percent of light. It is an amazing thought that there is now a material, composed of carbon nanotubes, that absorbs practically all light. What would a jewel made out of this material look like? In language, black is commonly used to underline disgust and disapproval: "Black Monday," "a black page in history," "take a black view of things." Black has a bad reputation. To consider black as a subject for an exhibition about jewelry is quite daring. It is an effort to rehabilitate black, and the reprinting of British filmmaker Derek Jarman's essay "Black Arts" from his book *Chroma* (1994) serves this aim. In a lyrical and associative style, he sketches all kinds of small stories, thoughts, and impressions about black, and asserts that black can stand for positive things as well as negative. Black can stand for mourning as well as dignity, for cosmic infinity and fertile earth, for evil and sexuality. So is black really something, or is it only a projection?

Not all of the works in *Just Must* are entirely black; there is also some use of gold, purple, brown, silver, and white. As Mälk writes: "(...) it is clear that in darkness all colours agree. It is darkest just before sunrise. This is when hope emerges. Black entails a reflection of promise. The miraculous violence of life that never apologises." The jewelers in this book are perfectly capable of dealing with the many variations of black; it can be soft and deep like velvet, dusky and shimmering, or pitch-dark, disorienting or twinkling like the firmament; it can be chic and shiny, or old, worn out, and disgusting. All makers are represented

in the book by a single work on a two-page spread, which is intentionally sprinkled with black dust, spots, and scratches. There are well known artists among them, who have also been represented in previous exhibitions by Mälk, but there are also newcomers like Akiko Kurihara (Japan), Kiko Gianocca (Switzerland), Julia de Ville (Australia), Francis Willemstijn (the Netherlands), Gemma Draper (Spain), and Andrus Rumm (Estonia). It is to Mälk's credit that she orchestrated these many different tones into a harmonious composition. ●

Liesbeth den Besten is an art historian and critic based in Amsterdam.

Susan Grant Lewin

A collection built from a blend of work and pleasure

BY URSULA ILSE-NEUMAN

SUSAN GRANT LEWIN'S enthusiasm is infectious as she leads me from one cache of jewelry to another in her spacious New York apartment. Unwrapping her treasures, some in packaging and boxes almost as ingenious as the objects they protect, she regales me with anecdotes about her history with each work and its maker. Clearly her collection is as much one of fascinating stories about the unique bond between artist and wearer as it is an amazing assemblage of contemporary art jewelry.

Susan Grant Lewin wearing a necklace by Axel Russmeyer, 2008

GIAMPAOLO BABETTO
Neckpiece, 2000
gold
diameter 6 ¼"

To jewelry artists, Susan Grant Lewin is a dream come true: a discerning and well-known collector who understands their creations and wears them prominently at major art events. In fact, she dons their precious output for any and all occasions, formal or everyday. It would suit neither Lewin's mission nor her style to treat her collection of jewelry—more than 400 pieces from contemporary artists around the world—as if it were comprised of rare butterfly specimens. The curios in her cabinet go out on the town, which is not to say that she shuns pieces that are difficult to wear; years after she has acquired them, some of her prized finds still await their debut.

Lewin's accomplishments as a jewelry collector are a demonstration of her passion for, and belief in, art and design. They are also a testimony to her inordinate energy and superb organizational skills. Dividing her time between her family, her company (Susan Grant Lewin Associates, a leading public relations firm for art, design, and architecture) and her collecting, she takes advantage of her travels around the world to visit jewelry centers, including Padua, Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Munich, attend lectures and exhibitions, search out galleries, and, above all, interact with artists.

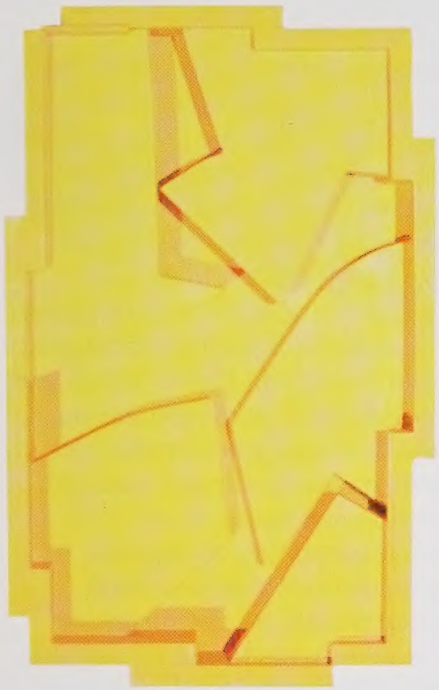
Lewin has a predilection for abstract, rather than figurative, jewelry, and while loath to identify her favorite artists, she acknowledges that she greatly admires Italy's Giampaolo Babetto for his superlative craftsmanship and for the classic and elegant simplicity of his shapes and gently sinuous surfaces. She also confides that her attraction to Scandinavian design has endured over time, starting with her 1974 purchase of a silver bracelet by renowned Finnish furniture, glass, and jewelry designer Saara Hopea-Untracht.

Like many other collectors of contemporary art, Lewin finds the opportunity to develop and maintain strong friendships with artists to be one of the important and enjoyable aspects of collecting. Her enviable ability to mix work and pleasure has enabled her to nurture these bonds throughout her career. As creative director for Formica from 1982 to 1995, she organized competitions and exhibitions featuring interior designs, furniture, and jewelry made from the manufacturer's popular plastic laminates. When promoting ColorCore, a more advanced Formica laminate notable for the uniform distribution of color throughout its thickness, Lewin seized the opportunity to introduce artists to this new material. The dazzling results can be seen today in her own collection in ColorCore creations by Claire Dinsmore, Robert Ebendorf, Fritz Maierhofer, and Pavel Opocensky, several of whom continue to capitalize on the expressive and formal potential of this quintessentially American product.

In 1986, while working on a project with the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Lewin wore a different piece of cutting-edge jewelry each day to a series of meetings with the museum's curator, and was eventually asked to become the jewelry buyer for the museum shop. She met scores of artists on her buying trips, and, mindful of the future, began interviewing them and documenting their creations and their careers.

As she sought out exciting works, Lewin realized that American jewelry artists were not receiving the recognition they deserved. Never one to sit back and wait for someone else to take charge, she determined to write a book championing the jewelry she had come to love. Published in 1994, *One of a Kind: American Art Jewelry Today* is now a classic on the bookshelf of every serious jewelry collector and curator.

As a daring collector with a discerning eye, Lewin has befriended many prominent jewelers early in their careers and then continued to collect their more mature triumphs. Betty Cooke, Thomas Gentille, Kiff Slemmons, Daniel Jocz, and Eva Eisler are just a few of the artists represented by works that span several decades. The first brooch Lewin purchased



THOMAS GENTILLE
Brooch, 2008
polychrome wood
4 x 2 ½ x ½"

ROBERT EBENDORF
Necklace, 1984
ColorCore, clothespins, rubber cord
length 36 ½"
PHOTO: MARK ROSKAMS

from Gentille in 1983 is bolstered by a pair of masks he made for a Halloween ball they both attended many years ago, and just recently she acquired two radically different works hot off his New York jeweler's bench.

Lewin's dedication to contemporary jewelry goes well beyond self-indulgence. With an eye toward making a contribution to the field and helping to document its history and its ongoing development, she strives to diversify her collection with an eclectic mix of masters and new talent from all over the world. Several years ago she began collecting work by mid-twentieth-century modernists, and now counts pieces by Art Smith, Harry Bertoia, and Ed Wiener among her prized possessions, along with works by Margaret DePatta, Claire Falkenstein, and Peter Macchiarini. Lewin also continues to further the careers of younger artists; one of her latest acquisitions is a large necklace of pyrite, glass, gold, and wool by Iris Bodemer, a German jeweler who works in Holland.

Lewin's accomplishments as a jewelry collector are a demonstration of her passion for, and belief in, art and design.

Aware of her thorough knowledge of the field and her "developed" eye, Lewin nevertheless wants to keep her collecting efforts spontaneous. Her hope is to remain "inspired by the piece of the moment." When asked about her future plans, she declares she'll keep on collecting and would consider doing another book and perhaps an exhibition. "Do you think I have too many pieces?" she asks, laughing. With all the pleasure Susan Grant Lewin gets from her collection, and the many artists who have benefited from her support, the answer is clear. ●

Ursula Ilse-Neuman is the curator of jewelry at the Museum of Arts & Design, New York.

Coining Art

Taking creative stock of currency

BY JENNIFER CROSS GANS

ALTHOUGH MANY WOULD consider gold or diamonds to be the most widely used and valuable objects in the world, the correct answer—at least over the last 5,000 years—is coins. In today's world of credit cards and online transactions, it is easy to forget the role of coins in creating commerce and civilization as we know it.

Inhabitants of the ancient cities of Mesopotamia first discovered the practical limits of using barley or other commodities to finance trade, property, pay soldiers, pay fines and dowries, and store wealth. During the next couple of millennia, coins made from silver, bronze, electrum (a light yellow alloy of silver and gold), copper, and occasionally gold were designed and hand-struck in countries throughout the Mediterranean, India, and (in a parallel development, cast) in China. Trade and commerce flourished, as did many cities.

STACEY LEE WEBBER
Penny Hammer (detail) from "The Craftsman" series, 2007
copper-nickel
length 12 ¼"

Holding an ancient coin, maybe one featuring the stylized image of Alexander the Great, is an invitation to ponder who used it, where, when, and for how long. Coins are the archaeologists' global positioning system, enabling them to track the great emperor's conquests through Greece, Turkey, Afghanistan, and into India. All ancient, and many modern, coins also reflect rulers' bragging rights. Wrote Richard Doty, author of the 1978 book *Money of the World*, "Coins could be used to inculcate loyalty to a ruler, either by references to his glorious antecedents or to what he was doing to earn his keep, or both."

Coins are rife with symbolism. Surrounding the ubiquitous rulers' portraits are frequently symbols of religion: gods and goddesses in ancient Rome, Christian iconography after Constantine. Animals are also popular, such as the lion (strength), the owl (wisdom), the eagle (victory) and, now, the panda (China). Many coins are still loaded with messages about community values—like the Liberty Dollar, with its classical head, "liberty" wreath, and message "E Pluribus Unum" on the front, with an eagle and the optimistic phrase "In God We Trust" on the back. Whether hand-stamped, crudely die-struck, misshapen, square (ancient Indian), shaped like flattened buns (from Greece, Persia and India) or tools (China), or minted during intermittent dark ages when production and aesthetic standards slipped, coins are more often than not works of art.

Given their portability, recognized value, and the general absence of safe places to store wealth, it's not surprising that coins became widely used throughout the world as adornment. Women received necklaces of coins as dowries, and wore them as earrings, head and clothing ornaments, parading them on special occasions, and passing them on to their daughters. Very often these ornaments were the only wealth women were allowed to own outright, and these pieces proclaimed their status and their husbands' success.

While the actual silver content of coins has wavered over the ages, by the 1820s it had stabilized, at least in the U.S., at 90 percent, only 2.5 percent less than sterling. Melted-down coinage became the staple of the metalworkers' trade, particularly since the mines were initially the sovereign's property both in Europe and the New World. Much American Colonial flatware and holloware was made in this way. Silver coins, often traded for with soldiers, were melted down by Native American craftsmen until the twentieth century. Even today, in some countries, Nepal for instance, one must provide the smith with coins to do the work.

With the high price of metals, particularly gold, silver, and copper, and the convenience of paper money and credit cards, coins are now in a precarious situation. Silver was removed from U.S. currency by 1970, while pennies, no longer worth their production price, frequently end up in the gutter. Fewer people than ever use coin boxes, or want to burden their wallets with heavy metal. Given the (relative) security of today's banks, and the availability of other kinds of investments, there's less need to

While coins have played a crucial role in culture and commerce for centuries, they are now gaining new currency within art.

stock up with Krugerrands or gold bullion.

However, coin collecting remains extremely popular, and new designs are even more artful and easy to manufacture, fueled by CAD-CAM programs and improvements in technology. The U.S. Mint is one of the most active producers, starting with the redesigned quarters issued between 1975 and 2008, the new $1 coins (1979 and 1997), and even the largely redundant penny, due to be redesigned this year at the urging of the zinc industry. The United Kingdom, Canada, and China are not far behind, and many other countries also see new coinage both as an income stream from the collector market, and a way of educating the world about their history, geography, and heritage.

Several well known artists have lent their talents to coin design. Sculptor Robert Davidson produced a $200 gold coin for Canada in 1997 with a Haida image of *Raven Bringing Light to the World*, much sought after by local collectors. The award-winning American designer Daniel Carr continues to produce coins and medallions using a proprietary 3-D digital mechanical transfer process. He is best known for his successful 2001 designs for the New York and Rhode Island state quarters. Carr has also produced a series of "Parody State Quarters," including *Nuke Mexico*, for New Mexico, showing a blooming mushroom cloud centered south of the border.

The sculptor Johnny Swing uses his talents—and thousands of coins—to make furniture, in a process he calls "repurposing." His *Nickel Couch* sits alone as sculpture or as interactive work, inviting the viewer to "sit or lounge while surrounded by money," says Swing; it is composed of 7,000 artfully arranged nickels, connected by 35,000 welds, above a substructure of stainless truss work utilizing 350 feet of stiffening rods.

Artist Stacey Lee Webber conveys a well-developed social conscience in her work, including her series "The Craftsman," which features tools fabricated with coins in honor of undervalued hand workers. Webber says, "I have chosen to construct objects out of pennies, nickels, dimes, and foreign coins that reflect the often disregarded physical struggle the everyday blue collar laborer undergoes to earn these stamped metal discs."

While coins have played a crucial role in culture and commerce for centuries, they are now gaining new currency within art. And as our buying power shrinks, the value of coins as a rich creative material seems to be happily on the rise.

Jennifer Cross Gans is a studio jeweler and writer based on San Francisco.

JOHNNY SWING
Nickel Couch, 2008
copper-nickel, stainless steel
28 ½ x 80 x 42"

DANIEL CARR
Nuke Mexico from the "Parody State Quarters" series, 2008
nickel-copper alloy
diameter 1"

South Africa

Unearthing artistic talent in the land of mining

BY LAUREN KALMAN

SOUTH AFRICA'S independent studio jewelers work within a complex political, social, and economic context. Situated at the bottom of Africa, jewelers often express a feeling of isolation from the global metalsmithing community. In their work, European traditions become hybridized with the heritage of indigenous African adornment, regional landscape, and the commercial jewelry industry. The platinum and diamonds that are mined locally are a major part of their design vocabulary, and are integrated with influences like colonial Dutch architecture, makeshift township settlements, and West African goldsmithing.

South Africa is a country of dichotomies. Mountains drop into the ocean, and expanses of desert transform into ordered, picturesque vineyards. Severe poverty rubs against modern excess. Only 14 years after the end of apartheid, relations and common ground between races are still being panned out of the deeply complex history of the place.

The country is striving to amend social injustices, most notably the apartheid ideology that sanctioned a class system based on race at a governmental level, which crescendoed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Large shifts in government structure and humanitarian rights occurred in 1994 with the first democratic election, followed by signing of a new constitution in 1996.

In the very new democracy of South Africa, disparate cultural heritages are brought together, but not homogenized; witness the government's acknowledgment of 11 national languages. This poetic attempt to recast a vision of "unified difference" mirrors the country's complicated history of turmoil, reinvention, and struggle to move forward.

Surrounding most of the urban centers are the informal settlements, referred to as townships, which are comprised almost exclusively of populations of non-European descent. The whitewashed Dutch-colonial architecture of Stellenbosch, with its upscale tourist guesthouses and boutiques, in the celebrated wine region outside Cape Town, for example, is in stark contrast to the overcrowded, ramshackled matrix of the surrounding settlements. In Stellenbosch, like in so many other cities in South Africa, extreme poverty is perpetually affronted with extreme affluence.

South Africa is also known for its mining operations and is the world's largest gold producer. The infamous DeBeers has a foothold in the country's diamond industry. The mining of precious metals and stones is a large component of the economy, which, with its less than pristine human rights reputation, employs around 150,000 people. Major South African mining corporations like AngloGold Ashanti, Anglo Platinum, and DeBeers are involved in not only jewelry production but in funding schools, exhibitions, museums, and cultural institutions.

For the studio jeweler, the infrastructure of the production industry can be difficult to navigate. Economically viable commodity objects are emphasized, often at the expense of experimentation and content. As Sandra Klopper, Dean of the Arts at the University of Pretoria, points out, the government's emphasis on "beneficiation," which demands that local materials be used to their full value as commodity objects, further complicates the jeweler's practice. There is, generally, a limited understanding of what it means to be an art jeweler. The

EMILE ERASMUS
bracelet, from the exhibition "AuDITIONS: Global Gold Couture"
COURTESY OF ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI

Exhibition gallery at Gold of Africa Museum, Cape Town, South Africa
COURTESY OF GOLD OF AFRICA MUSEUM

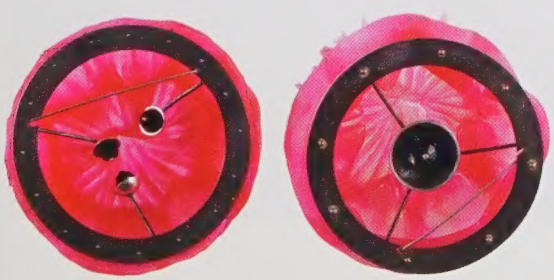
South African government regulates the procurement of precious metals and stones; independent jewelers must apply for a permit in order to purchase and manipulate raw materials. For some jewelers, this bureaucracy hinders a productive studio practice, and is even seen as a symptom of an industry controlled by a few key players.

Many South African studio jewelers look to traditional African techniques, such as gold leaf, beadwork, carved wood, and basket weaving. Nanette Nel, a recent master's student at the University of Stellenbosch, works with disgustingly pink, exotic floral forms made out of silicone rubber. Her handbags, brooches, and rings combine the intensely pigmented synthetic material with hidden black diamonds, carved wood, and gold leaf. She simultaneously nods to the experimental materials used in contemporary jewelry practices, Ashanti gold-leafed talismen, and the commercialized diamond industry.

Precious materials are often juxtaposed with found debris. Considering the breathtaking and diverse landscape of South Africa, naturally indigenous organic objects are a major influence on jewelry. In much of the local work, finely crafted settings cradle coal, native woods, and other non-precious materials.

Some jewelers are incorporating pop culture and street crafts; in this work, the found object is often used to produce a parody of the commercial jewelry industry.

NANETTE NEL
Protea Brooch I and *Protea Brooch II*, 2007
silicone, silver, onyx
diameter 3 ½"



Geraldine Fenn, based in Johannesburg, sets plastic figurines against silver silhouettes, creating juxtapositions sometimes comical or unsettling.

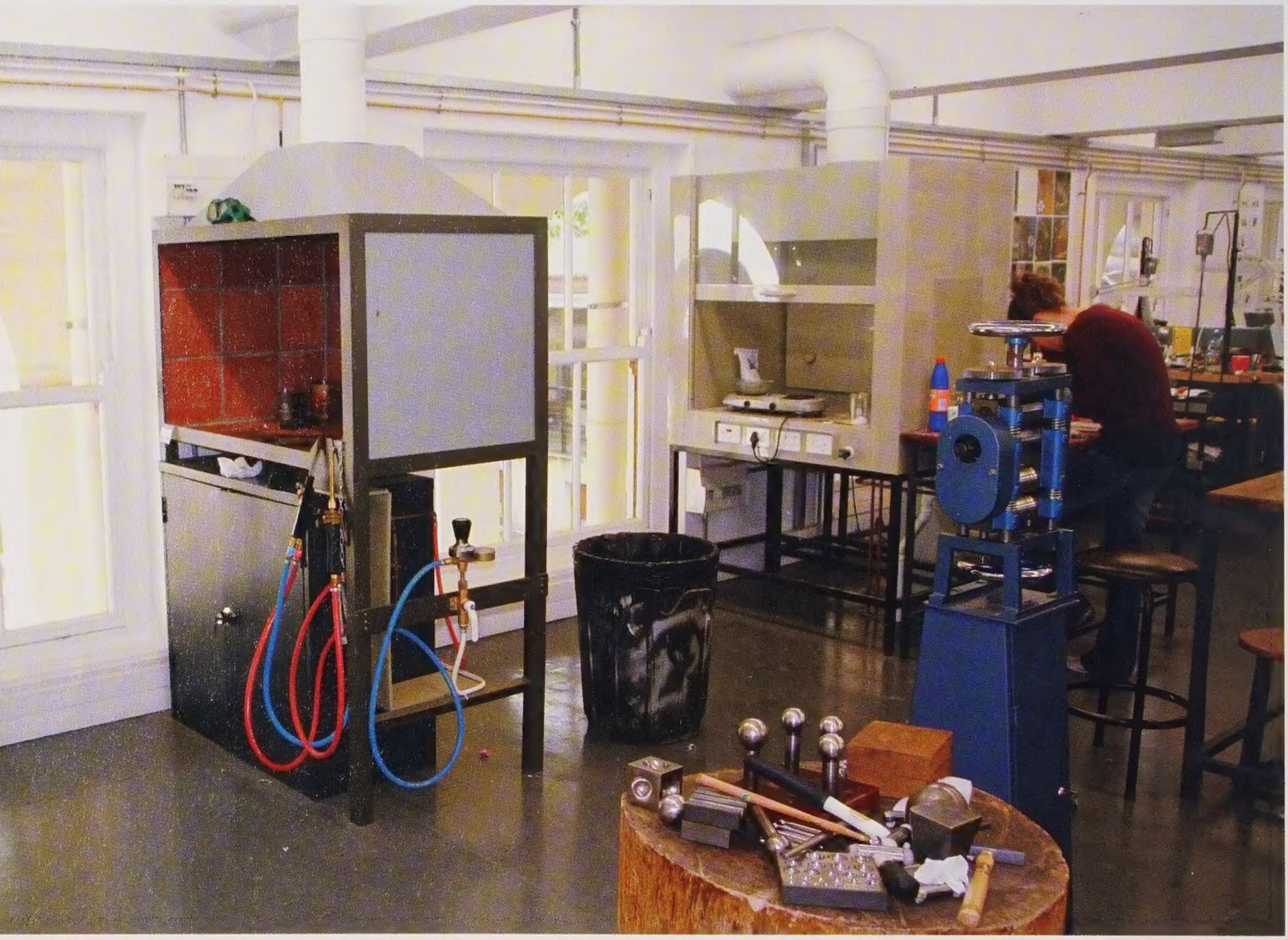
Makeshift construction using materials like rubber, plastic, and recycled metal is ubiquitous, from township buildings to handmade crafts designed for the tourist market.

Some jewelers adopt this bricoleur mentality. Marnell Kirsten and Eric Loubster employ immaculate craft and a formal understanding of design. The work of both artists combines elements such as highly refined polished platinum, raw hand wrought silver, and found kitsch objects including plastic toys and trinkets.

The many jewelry education institutions throughout the country are generally divided into two types: either technical universities, or universities that focus on production and design processes, which are fundamental for employment in the jewelry industry, including those located in Johannesburg, Cape Peninsula, Durban, and Tshwane.

The student demographic at the university level is still overwhelmingly Caucasian, though several independent schools have been founded with the intention of teaching bench and design skills to a broad demographic, such as the Ruth Prowse School of Art in Cape Town. The Soweto Jewellery School, based in the Soweto Township, is also focused on providing a technical jewelry education to disadvantaged populations.

Stellenbosch University boasts that it is the only university in South Africa to offer a conceptually based jewelry curriculum. Its students are required to



The platinum studio of the Jewelry Division, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa

take foundations courses in a curriculum modeled after the Bauhaus tradition. The jewelry studio facilities at Stellenbosch are impressive, with dedicated studios for each year of study (sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate majors), as well as a platinum studio funded by Anglo Platinum. In a highly rigorous and critical environment, students are challenged to push their designs beyond the obvious and the simply pleasing, to engage in a critical discourse surrounding adornment and personal objects.

Carine Terreblanche, Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of the Jewellery Division at Stellenbosch, says, "The four-year degree course combines theory with rigorous technical and conceptual training, and equips graduates with the necessary production and design skills to contribute to the establishment and promotion of a unique South African jewelry design and metal technique tradition." Her own work has addressed the uncomfortable topic of racial identity; she is currently combining African-influenced carved wood and gold leaf with high-gloss enamel paints into animated symbol-like brooches.

Many students, regardless of where they trained, end up working in some area of the jewelry industry. For those engaged in less commercial work, a few institutions are dedicated to the exhibition and sale of unique or limited production studio work. Tinsel Gallery, which opened in 2006, exclusively presents South African craftpersons, and has locations in both Johannesburg and Cape Town. The Design Indaba Expo, a South African juried design fair of local work, held in conjunction with the Design Indaba Conference on contemporary design, and the Jewellex Jewellery Fair, offer studio jewelers international exposure. Outside of galleries and fairs, some industrious

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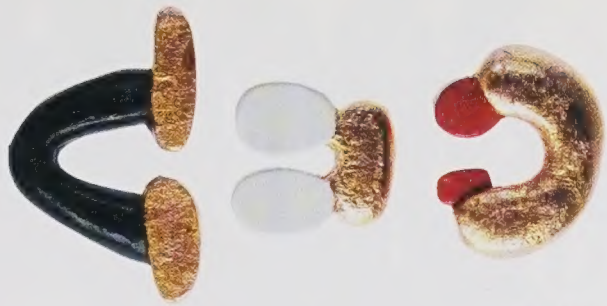


CARINE TERREBLANCHE
Drawing 1, Drawing 2, Drawing 3, 2008
wood, goldleaf, paint
1 ½ x 2"

MARNELL KIRSTEN
Neckpieces, 2007
each 2 ⅜ x ¾"

studio jewelers have also established independent productions and boutiques. For experimental jewelers there are more limited options for exhibition.

The Gold of Africa Museum in Cape Town, funded by AngloGold Ashanti, houses an extensive collection of historic and indigenous African gold objects, but also hosts temporary exhibitions of contemporary jewelry. Recently it presented "AuDITIONS," work from the international AngloGold competition of the same name, and "Inventions," an exhibition of jewelers affiliated with Stellenbosch University.

A number of South African studio jewelers and advocates are excited about the direction of the field. Safia Salaam of the Ruth Prowse School of Art sees a new and strong sense of community and experimentation among young studio jewelers. New generations of South African jewelers seem unintimidated by traditional restrictions.

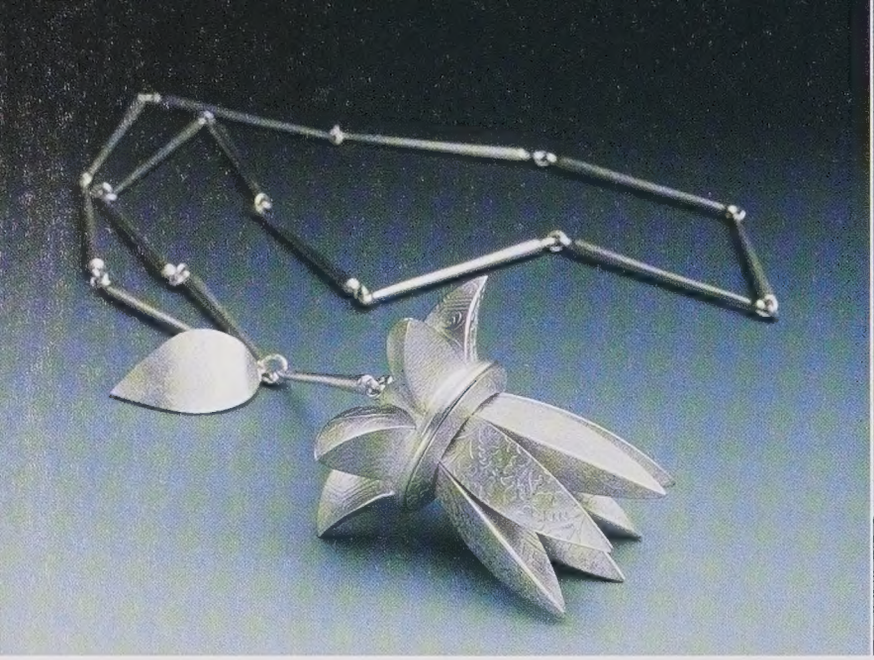
The most engaging South African studio jewelers continue to push boundaries in their work. This confidence gives them the opportunity to influence the commercial industry and challenge narrow views of what jewelry is and who makes it.

Lauren Kalman is an artist and a lecturer at Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design.

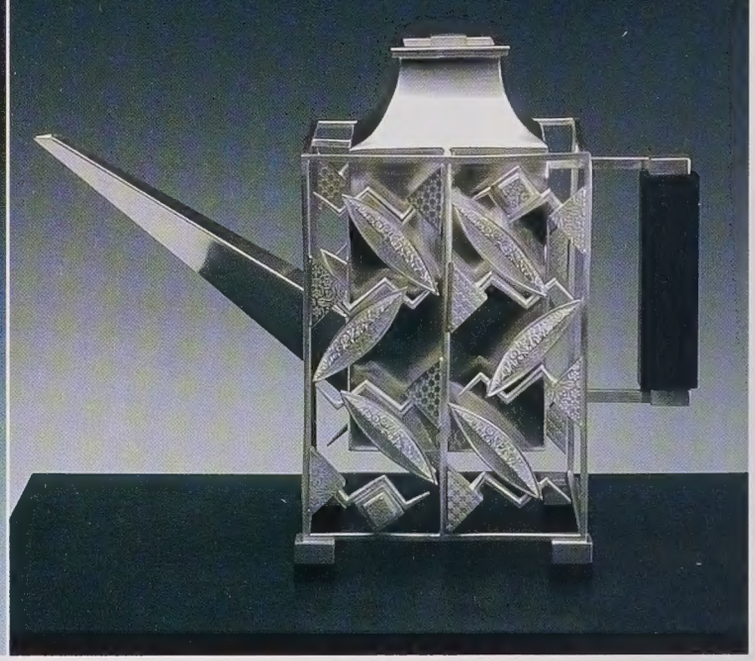
Linda Threadgill: Conceptualizing Ornament

A penetrating investigation into the nature of ornamentation

BY GLEN R. BROWN



Flower Pendant, 2000
sterling silver
3 1/8 x 2 7/8 x 2 7/8"
PHOTO: JAMES THREADGILL



Square Teapot, 2001
sterling silver, micarta
8 x 8 x 8", tray 9 x 14"
PHOTO: JAMES THREADGILL

LIKE SO MANY other modernist prophecies of irreversible evolution, the eradication of ornament decreed in the early twentieth century proved to be nothing more than a prolonged eclipse. In this century, ornament has been fully restored to the designer's repertoire and the craftsperson's store of creative devices.

And yet, ornament is not entirely what it was prior to its exile during the modern period. Every trip to the abyss entails a certain loss of innocence, and the price of ornament's reinstatement after its temporary fall from grace has been the necessity to justify itself as more than something superficial. Contemporary architects and, to a lesser degree, designers in metals, ceramics, and other so-called craft media have in some cases revived ornament as a multi-tasker that does duty equally in utilitarian and aesthetic terms. In the work of studio artists such as Linda Threadgill, however, the justification of ornament is no simple matter. Instead, it is subjected to a kind of ongoing interrogation that in the end may be sympathetic to ornament's claims of relevance but is no less rigorous on that account.

Every trip to the abyss entails a certain loss of innocence, and the price of ornament's reinstatement after its temporary fall from grace has been the necessity to justify itself as more than something superficial.

Threadgill's keen interest in ornament undoubtedly arises from her longstanding practice of etching motifs into the surfaces of her works, a process that she began perfecting as early as her graduate student days. In 1984, after studying the manner in which printed circuit boards were mass-manufactured, she developed a smaller and more portable version of industry's spray-etching machines. Armed with this technology, easily applicable to a photo-resist technique, she deftly created bas-relief patterns on thin metal plates that could be incorporated into larger and more complex works.

Threadgill's discovery of Swiss Art Nouveau designer Eugène Grasset's 1897 book *Plants and Their Application to Ornament* no doubt catalyzed the shift in her work toward a more conscious investigation of the topic in the late 1990s. Grasset's designs, intended for wallpaper, tiles, stained glass, and carved wood, presented ornament specifically in the context of architectural applications. Adopting analogies to these, Threadgill accordingly began to conceive of ornament in relation to three-dimensional space. Her 1999 *Flower Pendant*, a large articulated, sterling silver floral abstraction, proved to be a crucial transitional piece, in which the etched metal plates were incorporated not as two-dimensional units but rather as the components of a volumetric construction.

The connection between surface etching and individual sterling plates in *Flower Pendant* and related works became vaguely reminiscent of the relationship between wallpaper and wall, as Threadgill began employing the plates not merely as convenient carriers for pattern but rather as structural members of a larger composition. New engineering problems came into play, and she found herself confronting what she has described as a "huge learning curve" on her way to developing the skills necessary to consistently solder the plates together without damaging their delicate surfaces. More importantly, the desire to reconcile two-dimensional decoration with three-dimensional, constructed form demanded a modification of her

Forsaking Ornament, 2001
brass, micarta, resin
12 x 13 x 9"
PHOTO: JAMES THREADGILL

Standing Cup, 2008
sterling silver, brass, copper
12 ¼ x 8 ⅛ x 8 ⅛"
PHOTO: ERIC SWANSON

Conjure, 2008
copper
15 x 15 x 14"
PHOTO: ERIC SWANSON

Invoke, 2008
copper
9 x 17 x 17"
PHOTO: ERIC SWANSON

ideas. Threadgill questioned whether ornament should be considered merely a constituent of surface or, on the contrary, something more conceptually complex.

Threadgill thus directed the next phase of her investigation toward a very deliberate examination of the relationship between ornament and the utilitarian vessel. Reflecting on the practice, common among some historical Viennese silver manufacturers, of offering certain items in both plain and ornamented versions—the first for daily use and the second for formal occasions—she began to consider the function of ornament in the context of social signification. Because utility was not materially altered by the presence or absence of ornament, Threadgill began to consider whether the same might hold true about ornament in the presence or absence of utility. Would ornament continue to be ornament if its relationship to a functional object were entirely eliminated?

In 2000, Threadgill began a series in which sterling holloware utilitarian forms, mostly teapots and pitchers, were surrounded by cage-like ornamental structures reminiscent of decorative antique grillwork. The structures, simultaneously attached to the utilitarian forms and distanced from them by means of unobtrusive struts, were composed of thin silver strips and flat, vaguely leaf-like elements bearing bas-relief patterns. (Given the necessity for strength, these sterling elements were cast in molds taken from thinner, etched-plate originals.) In these works, smooth-walled functional objects and ornament maintained a close proximity to one another—and, therefore, a conceptual association—despite their separation by shallow, intervening space. This space, acquiring architectonic implications in conjunction with the fabricated forms, was key to the compositions. In most cases, Threadgill emphasized these spatial environments by situating the objects on trays or platforms fashioned from a contrasting black micarta.

In 2003, after retiring from a distinguished career at the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, where she had taught metalsmithing since receiving her MFA from the Tyler School of Art in 1979, Threadgill and her husband fulfilled their dream of relocating to the warmer climate and artistically rich environment of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The demands of finishing a custom-designed home and spacious studio left little time and energy for other creative output for the next few years, although she regularly engaged in drawing and gave careful consideration to future projects. In 2006, however, Threadgill returned to metalwork with a renewed devotion to the conceptual problems of ornament. In this period, three major series took shape, the first consisting of large, double-walled, openwork vessel forms; the second comprising standing cups with tall, intricately contoured and architecturally suggestive supports; and the third involving broad tray shapes with spatially problematic relationships to abstract floral ornament. In these newest works, she explains, "I'm no longer interested in utility, except symbolically. I may refer to a functional object, often a historical piece, but then I find some way to preclude that from ever actually serving a function."

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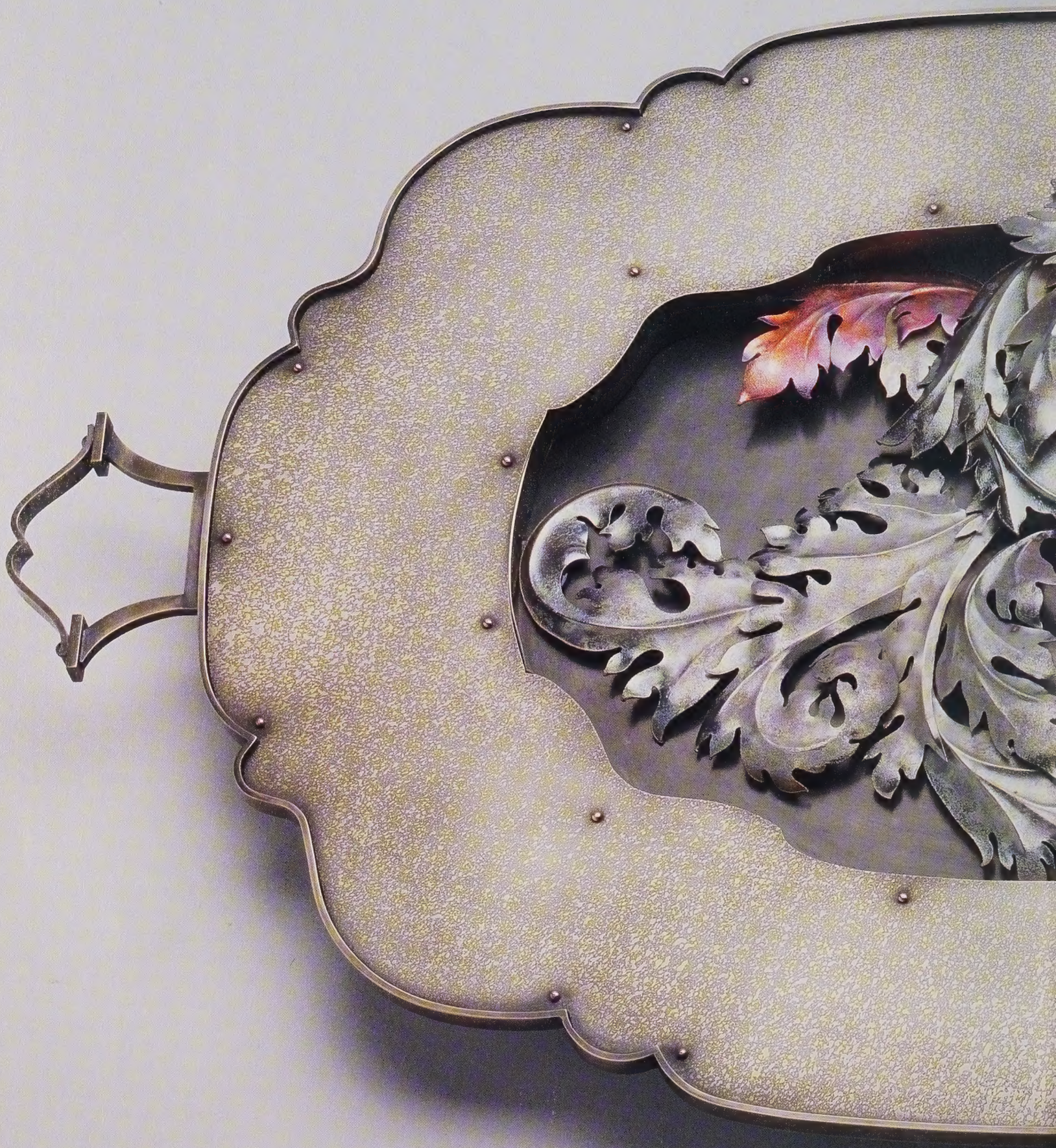
Despite this assertion, Threadgill has never conceived of the divorce of



Spinous (tray), 2008
copper, brass
22 x 37 x 4"
PHOTO: ERIC SWANSON

Threadgill's trays are subservient to an ornamentation that has become strangely aggressive, even animal-like in its usurpation of the space ordinarily reserved for utility. Ornament, in these works, asserts a will of its own.

ornament and function as a permanent feature of her work; in fact, she has already contemplated a future series in which functional objects may be designed to inhabit ornamental still-life settings when not in actual service. For the moment, however, maintaining a degree of separation between utility and ornamentation has proved helpful in the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the latter, primarily because this has permitted her to transcend traditional notions relating to form and surface. Emphasizing complementarity rather than hierarchy in her current work, she has adopted constructive strategies inspired by the Japanese design concept of *notan*, in which dark and light, positive and negative space, are juxtaposed to create balanced compositions. In theory, at least, this complementarity can be extended to the relationship between ornament and functional form.

In practice, this influence is most evident in four large openwork bowl forms bearing titles, such as *Conjure* and *Invoke*, that indicate the degree to which the functional object has disappeared and is now only hinted at by the shapes of the broad fields of ornamentation left behind. These fields, fabricated from hammered copper or brass abstractions of acanthus leaves and occasional rosettes, draw inspiration directly from architectural ironwork. Their relatively large scale—up to 17 inches in diameter—proved challenging to Threadgill, leading her to substitute forging marks for etching and, except in the case of the first in the series, riveting for soldering. In these works *notan* principles inspire the metalwork, which is constructed as two flamboyant shells, one nestled within the other, consisting of both positive motifs and the negative shapes left behind when these are cut from sheets of brass. Just as importantly, Threadgill has considered the positive and negative effects of light and shadow that these tracery vessel forms produce under certain conditions. "When you get strong light above them, they create amazing shadows," she observes. "I actually designed one with a piece of drawing paper below it so that I could trace the shapes and study the ornament."

Tendentious separation of utility and ornamentation characterizes Threadgill's second current series as well, but here the emphasis is placed on largely two-dimensional representation of functional objects from which ornament has been implicitly extracted. Fundamentally conceptual works, these pieces, including *Standing Cup, Counterpoint*, and *Forsaking Ornament*, clearly have less in common with working vessels than with abstractions such as Picasso's famous *Glass of Absinthe*. Like cubist sculptures, Threadgill's vessels manifest all of the visual attributes of functional forms—containment, volume, surface, and even traditional profiles—yet openly resist the possibility of actual use. The silver bowl of *Standing Cup*, for example, is inset with an etched plate—a symbolic meniscus—to prevent its ever being fully filled, and the contour-line teapot in *Forsaking Ornament* is wholly incapable of either storing or dispensing liquid. Significantly, however, as the functional forms in these sculptures condense into schematic profiles in quarter-inch cut brass, they begin to acquire obviously decorative attributes. Ornament, in other words, is stripped from form only to reappear in another guise, as that fundamental form is increasingly simplified and ultimately abstracted.

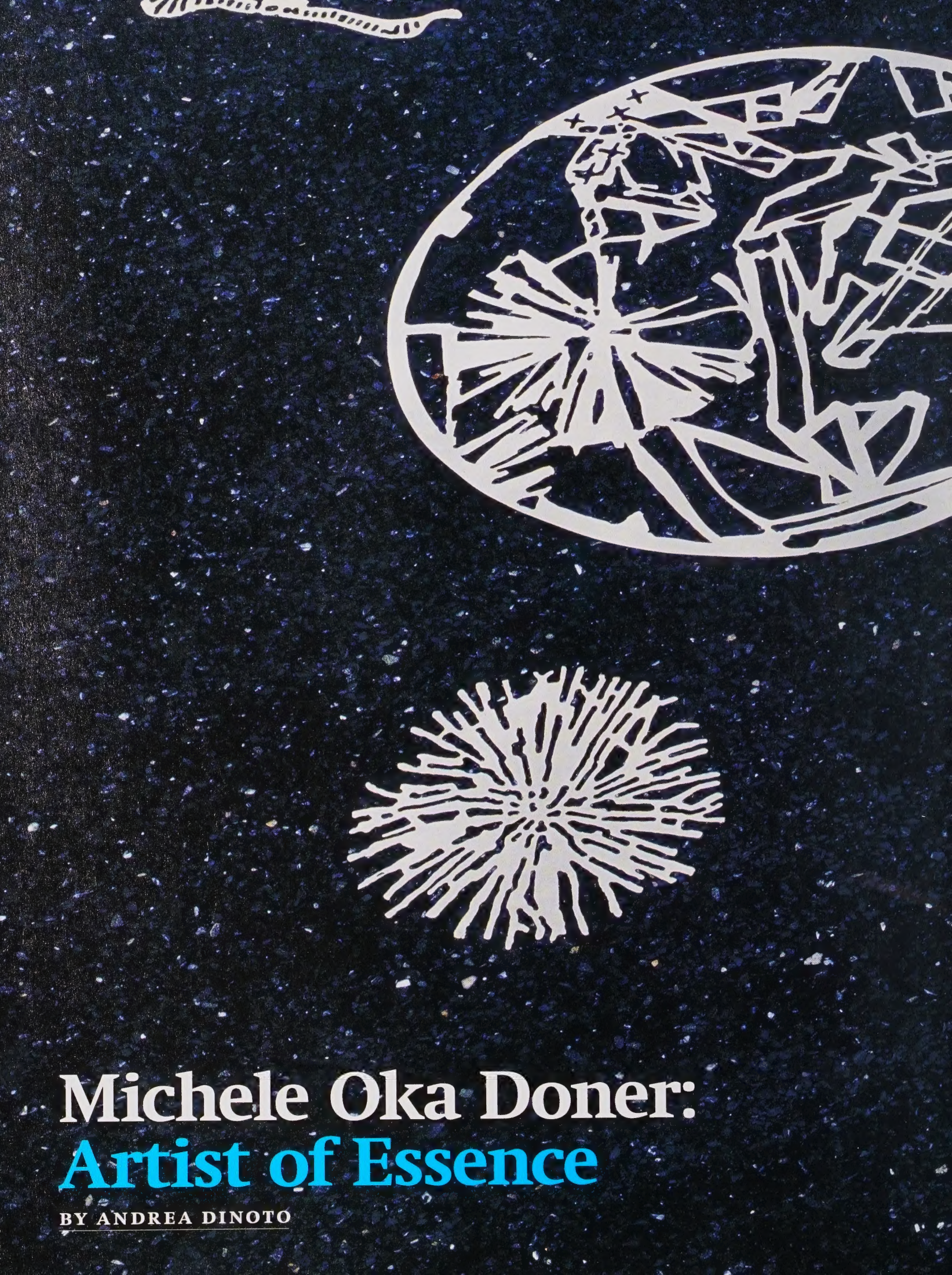
The third of Threadgill's current series, an oddly effective blend of baroque ostentation and minimalist severity, consists of tray-like brass and copper forms, complete with feet and handles, set on plywood shields that have been gessoed and painted in subtle hues to suggest brocaded tablecloths. Intended to be set vertically or horizontally against the wall like massive *rocaille* ornaments, these pieces—such as *Florid, Circinate*, and *Spinous*—reflect the deliberate negation of function by ornament. The trays seem so intent upon dishing up garlands of abstract acanthus and other leaves—which appear to have detached themselves from the now starkly barren, flat, and riveted rims to accumulate in dry clusters in the wells—that they have clearly lost touch with their inclinations toward any other service. Like Bernard Palissy's sixteenth-century *bassins rustiques*, Threadgill's trays are subservient to an ornamentation that has become strangely aggressive, even animal-like in its usurpation of the space ordinarily reserved for utility. Ornament, in these works, asserts a will of its own.

These three current series—the first, in which functional form dissolves entirely, leaving ornament as the sole object of contemplation; the second, in which functional forms are rendered as linear abstractions that ironically begin to acquire some of the vague traits of ornamentation; and the third, in which ornament is presented as a vital force that asserts its primacy over what have become fairly blank and sterile utilitarian objects—together constitute a carefully structured and rigorously analytical program of experimentation. In pursuing it, Threadgill directly engages one of the most pressing of issues for those who work in the so-called craft media today: establishing that a fundamental element in the traditions of those media, ornamentation, is conceptually thick despite its associations with the superficiality of surfaces. In her current work, one can hardly question this assertion. Through the intelligence, diligence, and technical precision by which these works have come about, Threadgill has clearly established her position at the forefront of the contemporary investigation of ornament in any medium. ●

Glen R. Brown is professor of art history at Kansas State University. *The author would like to thank the Mark A. Chapman Research Fund.*

Florid (tray), 2008
copper, brass, wood
33 ½ x 42 x 5 ¾" (with wood base)
PHOTO: ERIC SWANSON

Florid (tray), detail
PHOTO: ERIC SWANSON



Michele Oka Doner: Artist of Essence

BY ANDREA DINOTO

Life Forms, 2005 (detail)
bronze, terrazzo, mother-of-pearl
6,600 square feet
PHOTO: NICK MERRICK, HEDRICH BLESSING

"I AM WORKING with earth, air, fire literally all the time," says Michele Oka Doner. "It's fierce, one fierce day after another, all problem solving that has to do with living." For Oka Doner, life and art coalesce in a process that directly engages nature itself. Her seductive oeuvre comprises sculpture, functional objects, and architectural installations, and in each of these categories, Oka Doner plumbs the physical worlds of botany, sea life, cosmology, and even her own body to extract motifs and forms. A shell, a seed pod, a fan of coral, a mass of tangled roots—whatever could be found tossed up on a beach—provides the visual language for Oka Doner's bold, evocative works, from salad servers to jewelry to freestanding figures of mythic proportions, rendered in bronze, silver, glass and clay.

Oka Doner's personal and aesthetic mythologies have been enmeshed since childhood. She grew up by the sea in Miami Beach, and discovered clay at art school in Ann Arbor, where she made her first porcelain tattooed dolls and began to work with low-fired organic forms. She turned to metals as a way to achieve greater scale than the ceramic medium allowed, then ventured into a broader art for public spaces. Her most famous installation is the 1995 *A Walk on the Beach*, the (soon-to-be-expanded) half-mile-long terrazzo concourse at Miami International Airport, strewn with mother of pearl and embedded with thousands of bronze sea forms. Her home studio, a 5,000-square-foot loft in New York's SoHo, is furnished almost entirely with pieces of her own design. On any given day, works in clay and wax, some in progress, others awaiting shipment to the foundry, share space with her monumental bronze tables, benches, and sculptural chairs (one cast, incredibly, in sterling silver) and with collections of natural objects that serve as inspiration, and possibly raw material, for future works. The backdrop for this tableau is an immense library housed in floor-to ceiling shelves that provides the reading and research in everything from philosophy to speculative science that feeds Oka Doner's creative processes.

Oka Doner has been called by critics "an American transcendentalist in modernist form"[1]; an artist with a "kinship to surrealism"[2]; and a designer whose works "respond to archetypal needs in ourselves."[3] She easily inhabits each of these personas, all the while employing an expressionist style that precludes mere replication of the natural object. What the viewer invariably experiences, particularly with Oka Doner's metal work—an arm-length silver spoon, say, or a diamond-set bracelet cast from a grape stem—is delight and astonishment that such things have come to exist at all. Although the artist insists that her work is not "about" materials, she admits that her discovery, and subsequent mastery, of archival wax marked a turning point. Whether used in its own right, or applied to a natural object—such as coral, bark, or a leaf—wax can add a sensual dimension to what is already an elemental creation. Wax is of course a basic intermediate stage in the casting process, but Oka Doner has made it essential as well to the creation of form. In this regard, Oka Doner cites the Italian sculptor Medardo Rosso as an important influence. (Rosso, who died in 1928, is often credited as the first truly expressionist sculptor, whose wax-veiled heads and figures impressed Rodin and foreshadowed that artist's iconic 1898 sculpture *Balzac*.[4])

This is the magus, the wizard, the enchantress speaking, but one whose spells turn a twisted palm leaf into a vase and thorny branches into surreal chairs: objects that mythologize, and thus sanctify, the rituals of daily life.

Life Forms, 2005
Life Sciences Building, Rutgers University, New Jersey
bronze, terrazzo, mother-of-pearl
6,600 square feet
PHOTO: NICK MERRICK, HEDRICH BLESSING

Coral Wave Chair, 1993
sterling silver
31 x 22 x 14 ½"
PHOTO: NICK MERRICK, HEDRICH BLESSING

"I am a distiller," Oka Doner has said. "I take a bird's egg and a frog, and a stone, and a shell, and a seed, and a stream and I take the essence of them all and I make essence."[5]

This is the magus, the wizard, the enchantress speaking, but one whose spells turn a twisted palm leaf into a vase and thorny branches into surreal chairs: objects that mythologize, and thus sanctify, the rituals of daily life. Oka Doner's prodigious transformative—and form-making—powers were stunningly in evidence at the Marlborough Gallery's 2008 show of her recent figural sculpture in bronze and clay. Like a gathering of dramatis personae in some primordial creation myth, the headless beings, 15 in all, stand on human feet, suspended, it seems, between states of animation and decomposition, erosion and becoming. Named for mythological gods and goddesses, the figures both invoke and invite consideration of the classical narratives linking human nature and divinity. Their inner quietude and casual stance contrasts violently with their scored, bristling surfaces, some of which resemble ancient, decaying materials torn from the earth or excavated from the deep. Oka Doner in fact used coral, reeds, and sea sponges in some pieces, while the monumental *Angry Neptune* (angry, perhaps, at the despoiling of oceans) looms aroused and godlike—a mythic

Angry Neptune, 2008
cast bronze, unique
77 x 26 x 29 ½"
PHOTO: NICK MERRICK, HEDRICH BLESSING

In both bronze and clay figures, Oka Doner demonstrates her mastery of surface treatment, which contributes both depth and complexity to each of the works.

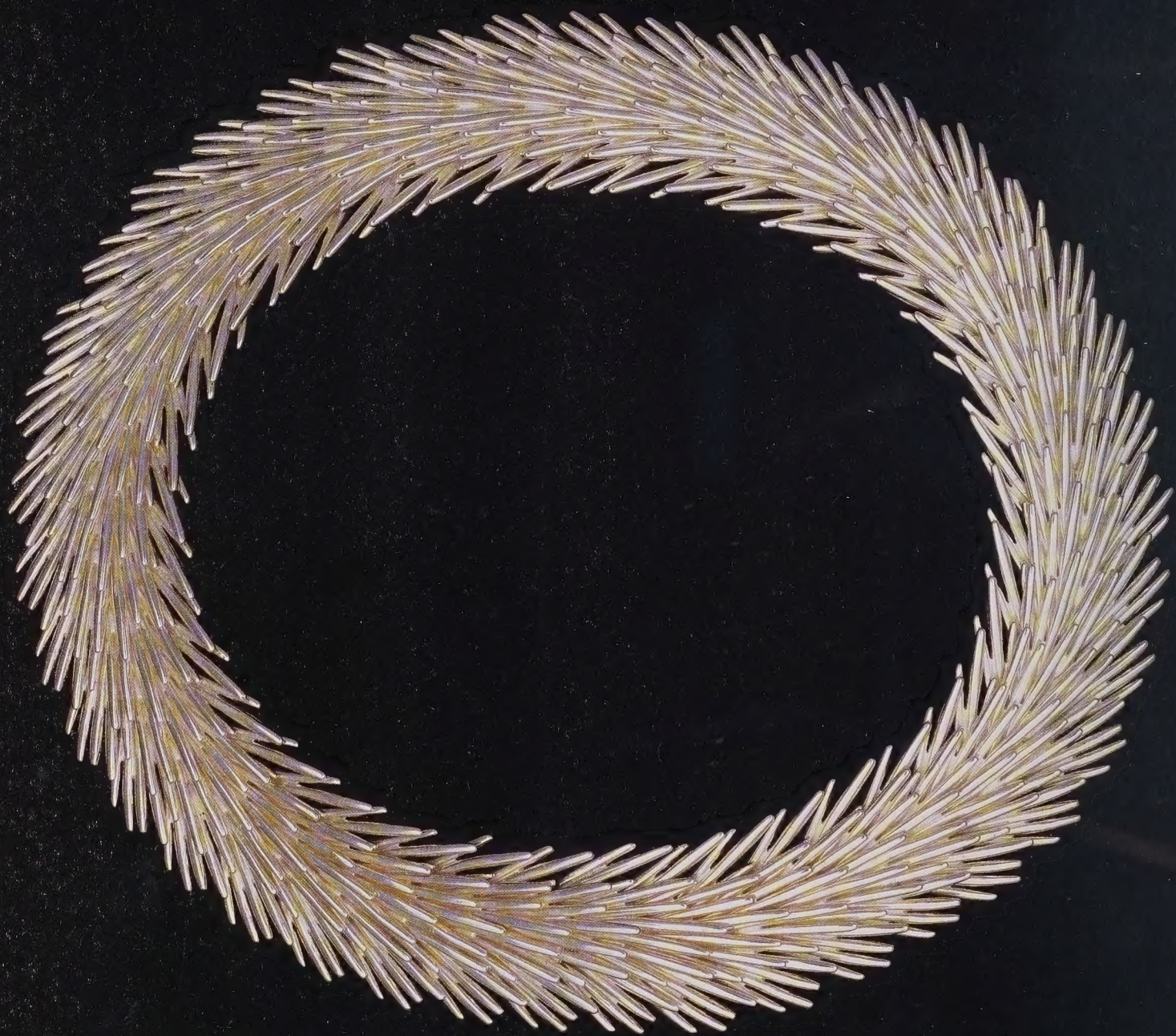
progenitor—seemingly composed entirely of roots and corroded shell.

In both bronze and clay figures, Oka Doner demonstrates her mastery of surface treatment, which contributes both depth and complexity to each of the works. The patination of many of the bronze figures appears as a dull gold with coppery highlights, with weathered greens and browns used effectively in the interior hollows of the deliberately open torsos—metaphorically, the sea inside is revealed. The illusory effect is of aged precious metal, burnished in part, yet corroded with sea salt over time. On the coral-based, unique bronze *Pallene I*, a gorgeous milky bismuth patina imparts a lacelike effulgence, delicate yet ancient and enduring.

Caio (Consumed by Fire) is a life-size, iron-glazed porcelain female nude, whose deeply ridged surface suggests extreme scarification, as if the flesh had been pleated in an act of macabre Fortunyesque dressmaking—the artist's ironic take on the decorative. In contrast, the surface of Oka Doner's bronze *Primal Self-Portrait* is suggestive of petrified wood, as deeply elemental and transformative as the fossilization process itself. With this piece the artist joins the cast, so to speak, of her own idyll; but not to be upstaged by her own creations, a photograph of Oka Doner herself appears on the catalogue's frontispiece, barefoot, draped classically in white, and gazing meditatively askance, flanked by an immense palm leaf and a chair of her own design; the maker as tableau vivant. The inclusion of her photograph with her work underscores her oft-stated view of the oneness of her art and life, but also serves to document the process of making and living, which for this artist involves performance and ritual. In *Natural Seduction*, the definitive book on her work, we see her as a modern-day priestess lighting the table-size *Root System Burning* (2002–03) bronze candelabra, not only to provide a sense of scale, but to show how it will live with us, acquiring dripped melted wax year after year that will gradually alter its sculptural form. She also appears as a ghostly commuter passing in front of *Radiant Site*, her astonishing 1990 gold tile wall installation in New York City's Herald Square subway station; as a feminist icon in black dress and pearls, casually holding a lighted blow torch; "caught" in fuzzy focus like a sultry wood nymph, amongst the banyan trees; and at the down-and-dirty work of installing bronze motifs in terrazzo walkways.

As self-consciously as Oka Doner curates her own image, her work retains a signature spontaneity seen as much in the functional as in the figural. Her circular bronze 1995 *Radiant Disk Table*, for example, was cast from wax hand-scored by the artist, who was inspired by the striations of palm fronds. A gold patina supplies luminosity—and radiance, literally—to the graphic sunburst pattern. Once

Pallene I and *Pallene II*, 2004
cast bronze, unique
64 x 18 ½ x 12"; 60 x 18 x 15"
PHOTO: NICK MERRICK,
HEDRICH BLESSING



Christofle Palm Frond Necklace, 2005
sterling silver
15 x 1 x ¼"
PHOTO: D. JAMES DEE

twisted impulsively into a cone shape to make a carrier for orchids on one of Oka Doner's frequent nature walks, a palm frond also informed the 2003 silver vases she produced for Christofle. For that same company, Oka Doner created a silver *Frond Necklace* in 2005 of overlapping palm elements, a project that her fashion photographer son Jordan helped her with, she says, deciding which module worked best for this elegant production piece.

Oka Doner's remarkable jewelry and accessories remain, for the most part, one-off pieces in her own or private and institutional collections, or recently, as editions from the online retailer Afsoun. In a subversive pairing of bronze with diamonds, she has created grape-stem and coral bracelets that grip the wrist like a mermaid's hand, and a bronze *Seed Corsage* with diamond-tipped petals that, for all its decorative beauty, suggests an alien life form. A sterling silver handbag is cast from a rectangular hunk of rough tree bark, whose potential for elegance only Oka Doner could have divined. An uncanny ability to mate untamed, natural form to quotidian function informs all of her work, whether she is creating accessories, furniture, architectural elements, or decorative pieces for well-established companies.

In 2003, Oka Doner was invited by the venerable American company Steuben Glass to join their stable of contemporary artist-designers and create a collection of functional objects. Never having worked in glass, Oka Doner nonetheless boldly envisioned a piece in which metal would partner equally with the company's famed crystal. Steuben pieces have sometimes included small metal ornaments that the company termed "jewelry." In 2007, Kiki Smith (one of several contemporary artists in Steuben's stable) elaborated on the idea, with a glass bird perched on a detachable silver branch that becomes a wearable brooch. But Oka Doner detonated this precious concept with the magnificent *Ocean Reef Bowl*, a fish bowl that sits on a massive bronze base cast from sea sponges and other organic materials. The round crystal bowl is engraved with diatoms (a type of single-celled algae), so that the entire design is an integration of both the fluidity of the sea and its living creatures, visible and invisible. "Michele thinks big," says Andrea Schwan, creative consultant to Steuben and Oka Doner's friend. "She brought a level of wildness to something ordinarily very controlled."

Oka Doner spent five weeks in Germany, in 2008, developing designs for the Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg, a revered 260-year-old European company that, like Steuben, has sought to rejuvenate its product lines with works by contemporary artists such as Ted Muehling and Hella Jongerius. Historically, rococo porcelain figurines and elegant table services have been the company's stock in trade, but Oka Doner eschewed, predictably, the postmodern approach that would dictate visual references to the company's past. Instead, she focused on her discovery of the local blood-red clay. This "Bavarian dirt," she says, "was for me primal and immediate material that references not the history of the company but time and place [...German

Christofle Palm Vases, 2003
sterling silver
height 10 ¼ and 13 ¾"
PHOTO: JEAN-JACQUES COLLOT

An uncanny ability to mate untamed, natural form to quotidian function informs all of her work, whether she is creating accessories, furniture, architectural elements, or decorative pieces for well-established companies.

Queen Bee Dome, 2007
Joyce Boutique, Hong Kong (interior)
gilded steel, cast bronze, sterling silver
diameter approx. 25'
PHOTO: ANDREW J. LOITERTON

Queen Bee Dome, 2007
(detail with sculptural bees)
bees' length 2-3"
PHOTO: ANDREW J. LOTTERHOS

Seed Corsage, 2001
diamonds, bronze, ribbon
2 ½ x 2 x 1 ¼"
PHOTO: NICK MERRICK, HEDRICH BLESSING

soil]." Oka Doner chose to make unique, non-gender-specific terra cotta figures, that when high-fired to the point of vitrification became a deep red and had a "sense of earth that's quite different from crust or mud." Included in the Marlborough show, the figures are, in Oka Doner's words, "made to look like a succession of tightly managed waves," as if spiraling out of Nymphenburg's most elemental origins to engage a new generation of collectors.

The artist brings this visionary engagement with nature to all her projects, including architectural installations for governmental buildings, institutions, and retail stores. For the United States Courthouse in Laredo, Texas, in 2003, Oka Doner envisioned a *River of Quintessence* (inspired by the nearby Rio Grande) flowing through the L-shaped footprint of the building's ground floor, of shimmering particles of green glass embedded in terrazzo. For the U.S. Courthouse in Gulfport, Mississippi, also in 2003, she created an undulating security screen of cut steel, whose pattern was inspired from a postcard image of Spanish moss hanging from live oak trees. Oka Doner is particularly proud of her 2007 collaboration with the Joyce Boutique in Hong Kong, which produced one of her most theatrical and witty designs. A dramatic gilt-steel, laser-cut, backlit façade draws the public into an elegant space, where a "queen bee" theme subtly references the shop's well-heeled clientele. Shoppers browse under a 25-foot-diameter *Queen Bee Dome* complete with cast bronze and silver bees. To experience this or any Oka Doner space is to participate in a unique performance of nature, one that has been directed and refined by an artist of uncommon skills and sensibilities.

As Suzanne Ramljak wrote of Oka Doner in *Natural Seduction*: "Whether public or private, her art provides a form of secular communion. Her work invites us to dwell with the forces of nature and by so doing to better commune with ourselves." Oka Doner accomplishes this feat through a fearless, deeply sensual embrace of the earth and its mysteries. ●

Andrea DiNoto is the author of the award-winning botanical history, The Pressed Plant: The Art of Botanical Specimens, Nature Prints, and Sun Pictures.

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1. Donald Kuspit, "Skinned Alive: Michele Oka Doner's Bio-Figuration," in *Human Nature: The Figures of Michele Oka Doner* (New York: Charta Books Ltd., 2008), p. 10.
2. "The Marriage of Venus and Vulcan," essay by Suzanne Ramljak. In *Michele Oka Doner: Natural Seduction*, Suzanne Ramljak, Morris Lapidus, and Arthur C. Danto. Hudson Hills Press, 2003.
3. David Revere McFadden, "Michele Oka Doner: Beyond the Limits of Imitation," in exhibition catalogue *Ceremonial Silver* (New York: Primavera Gallery, 1999).
4. "The sculptor should, through a summary of impressions he has received, communicate all that struck his own sensibility, so that looking at his work, one feel entirely the emotion he experienced while he observed nature." Medardo Rosso quoted in *Medardo Rosso* by Margaret Scolari Barr (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1963), p. 9.
5. Barbara Bloemink, "A Natural Order: The Work of Michele Oka Doner," in exhibition catalogue *Michele Oka Doner New Sculpture* (New York: Marlborough Chelsea, 2003), p. 2.

Steuben Ocean Reef Bowl, 2006
bronze, etched glass
base length 15"
PHOTO: JAY ZUKERKORN FOR STEUBEN GLASS

Coral Reef Bracelet, 2006
bronze, diamonds
4 x 3 ½"
PHOTO COURTESY SARA BENDA, AFSOUN

Mining History: Ornamentalism Revisited

Contemporary jewelers and designers usher in a revival of ornament, but with a twist

BY LENA VIGNA AND NAMITA GUPTA WIGGERS

ORNAMENT IS BACK. And it is not being dismissed as the superfluous and kitsch addition of one element added atop another form, as bemoaned by Alfred Loos in *Ornament and Crime* (1929). Perhaps more surprisingly, the design world that has followed Mies van der Rohe's "less is more" dictum for decades has also become enmeshed in this embrace of pattern and ornament.[1] In June 2007, *I.D.*, the country's preeminent industrial design magazine, devoted an entire issue to ornament. As editor Julie Lasky wrote in her introduction to the issue, titled "Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful": "Today, ornament no longer equals reckless frivolity but has taken on soul. For those starved by modernism's austerity, elaborate surface treatments and not-strictly-functional sculptural forms represent a vast buffet of visual and tactile possibilities … An exuberant tangle of styles, colors, and textures no longer suggests chaos or eccentricity but individuality—the kind of plentitude that could match taste or need on demand."[2]

EMIKO OYE
The Queen Margherita from "My First Royal Jewels Jewellery Collection," 2007
Lego pieces, coated copper wire, rubber cording, sterling silver, steel
length 19 ¾"
PHOTO: CHRISTINE DHEIN

MARIANNE ANDERSON
Disorder Earrings, 2005
oxidized silver, 18k gold,
garnet, mabe pearl
3 ½ x 2"

Artists, craftspeople, and designers are sampling historical patterns, motifs, and forms through an energetic and theoretical investigation of ornament. One's walls can be adorned with Blik's "iron vines" and "flock" vinyl decals. Windows can be veiled in Tord Boontje's laser-cut Tyvek curtains, toast can be seared with Delft china patterns from Rotterdam design duo Minale Maeda's electroplated griddle—even one's sidewalk can be personalized with British designer Jethro Macey's concrete "Lace Paving Slabs." Ornament and pattern are clearly "in."

How, then, are art jewelers engaging this global visual and cultural trend? In terms of jewelry, one could argue that "ornament" never disappeared. That said, something different is happening today that reveals a new approach to pattern, silhouette and form. A contemporary vocabulary is emerging in which the baroque, the rococo, the curvilinear and the unabashedly ornate features of historic jewelry are taking a new, redefined center stage. Artists are looking backwards to look forward, democratizing forms and patterns previously preserved for royalty through a range of new materials (from precious to industrial) and via such unexpected vehicles as t-shirts and installations.

What follows is intended to catalyze conversation, to suggest emerging categories that can easily shift or be redefined. To initiate the dialogue, however, we have identified five ways through which art jewelers are exploring ornament today: by fragmenting and abstracting historical forms; employing new technologies; creating new versions of "familiar" jewels; neutralizing markers of luxury; and examining the relationship between jewelry, the body, and space.

It does not really seem appropriate to call this strong body of work a trend; it feels like an inevitability, a necessity. These explorations are not hampered by the past but electrified by it—the familiar becomes strange, the known starts to become the unknown. It is déjà vu.

Artists are looking backwards to look forward, democratizing forms and patterns previously preserved for royalty through a range of new materials and via such unexpected vehicles as t-shirts and installations.

Fragmentation And Abstraction

Part of the power of these contemporary works is that artists can rely today upon mimicry and memory to connect with the viewer. If the essence of the jewel, of the historical piece, is familiar, viewers and wearers can access the logic without much trouble. The specific source is not always important to an understanding of the work: the clarity of the silhouette of a gem-laden necklace, for example, is apparent without explication. There are a variety of strategies being used today that call attention to the shifting ground between original and copy.

Leonor Hipolito, for example, abstracts yet maintains recognizable forms that connect us to historical signs of affluence while simultaneously democratizing them. Hipolito's "Recollection" series is developed from her memory of eighteenth-century jewels in the collection of the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon, Portugal. By hand-cutting silhouettes of "fancy" jewels from rubber and other materials, she simultaneously challenges and

LEONOR HIPOLITO
Pin (Pendant, c. 1760, Portugal)
from "Recollection" series, 2004
silver
3 x 3 ½ x ⅓"

KIMBERLIE TATALICK
NEOclassic Neckpiece, 2007
ABS plastic (modeled in Rhino, FDM printed)
19 x 19 x 3/4"

plays with concepts of the luxurious and the banal, the real and the remembered. Translating her recollections of these pendants or ribbon bows into flattened brooches, she abstracts the essence of the real objects, creating physical "echoes" of the original.

While there is a playful quality to this type of manipulation, there is undoubtedly a great reverence for the work of metalsmiths and craftspeople who have preceded contemporary practitioners. Trained metalsmiths with a deep understanding of the history of jewelry, artists such as Hipolito and Marianne Anderson, for example, are effectively able to abstract and rescale material and form, creating an ornamental shorthand.

Anderson employs fragments of ornamental forms found in velvet brocades, cultural relics, and architectural elements. She reworks isolated motifs using the traditional materials of jewelry: silver, gold, gemstones and pearls. Anderson's process of fragmentation and reconstruction, as

in her *Disorder Earrings*, calls attention to the vocabulary of ornament, revealing the individual units of pattern. By oxidizing the silver, the forms also recall decorative ironwork and suggest a shift of large-scale masculine architectural forms into portable, wearable, and feminine objects.

Anya Kivarkis's research on Baroque jewelry revealed that much of what remains from that time is sketches of a piece before or after it was dismantled and reworked into another form. As a result, she argues, we "rely on representations to serve as the history of jewelry objects, leaving us with a mid-documented past." In her "Blind Spot" series, Kivarkis recreates historic jewelry, addressing gaps and damage to the "original" illustrations by placing a white cube over the illegible parts. The resulting works, executed in a minimal white palette, reveal the curvilinear structure and angles of the faceted jewels as lines and forms rather than luxurious materials, with the cube referencing the conceptual art arena in which the work operates.

THE OPULENT PROJECT
Small Greville Earrings, Red, 2008
acrylic, silver
height 2 5/8"

Techno-Ornament

Today, art jewelers borrow freely from a range of processes outside of traditional metalsmithing to create new ornamental forms, enlisting everything from textile handicrafts to technology. Long fascinated with embroidery and lace, Brigitte Adolph turns elements of family heirlooms into white, silver, and yellow gold. This jewelry continues a tradition of lace as adornment, but as jewel, not as cloth. Artist Stanley Lechtzin's introduction of CAD/CAM equipment into art jewelry in the 1970s changed the forms, materials, aesthetic, and tools available to the studio jeweler. Today Kimberlie Tatalick draws on this technology, using rapid-prototyping design and an FDM machine to create one-of-a-kind necklaces, brooches, bracelets, and rings that mimic the loops, crevices, and facets of gemstone and metal—but in plastic. The resulting works are detailed, elaborately formed, their monochromatic palette calling attention to the structure rather than the glimmer of a colored stone or precious metal.

For collaborators Meg Drinkwater and Erin Gardner of "The Opulent Project," technology functions as a means of intervention, a process through which the artists can simultaneously subvert and respond to social preconceptions about value. By mass-producing a silhouette of Queen Elizabeth II's *Greville* earrings in nametag plastic, "The Opulent Project" democratizes historic jewelry otherwise available only through an image. Using cost-effective materials and methods, the earrings question class, taste, and materiality. These works feel simultaneously old and new, engaging historical jewelry, handicrafts, and Lechtzin's experimental works and adding a contemporary ornamental flair for the baroque.

BRIGITTE ADOLPH
Volute, 2007
18k yellow gold, rubies
2 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 1/2"

The New Bijoux

While the use of non-traditional materials to construct art jewelry is not new, the ways in which historical jewelry

ULI RAPP
Maiden Blush Collection, 2006-present
cotton lycra t-shirts with textile printing
custom made to size

CONSTANZE SCHREIBER
Elisabeth from "Ornament and Crime" series, 2005
fur, lead, silver
11 x 8 x ¾"

is used today is distinctive. By employing screenprinting, children's toys, and home computers, contemporary art jewelers have taken the forms of luxurious jewels previously restricted to royalty and instead involve the wearer in a collaborative and interactive experience. The gemstone and its setting, longtime markers of luxurious jewelry, can be dramatically reconfigured, initiating a conversation regarding value and status.

Drawing on Elizabethan and Baroque designs, Uli Rapp creates historically based brooches and necklaces cut from tricot and rubber. She also adds luxury to the quotidian T-shirt with a screenprinted series that renders the artifice of the "necklace" clearly visible, mirroring couture fashions which, as *InStyle* magazine recently noted, offer a "coronation's worth of carats on necklines." Here, the wearer's body shapes the necklace, rather than hosting it.

Based on works by Cartier and Boucheron, longtime jewelers to royalty, Emiko Oye uses children's toys to create interactive, personalizeable jewelry. Oye's "My First Royal Jewels Jewellery Collection" is constructed from Lego building blocks, complete with instructions on how to deconstruct a necklace into several separate wearable parts (much like a parure). The construction and reconstruction of the jewelry mimics the active play of the Lego blocks, while simultaneously linking artist and wearer through process and material.

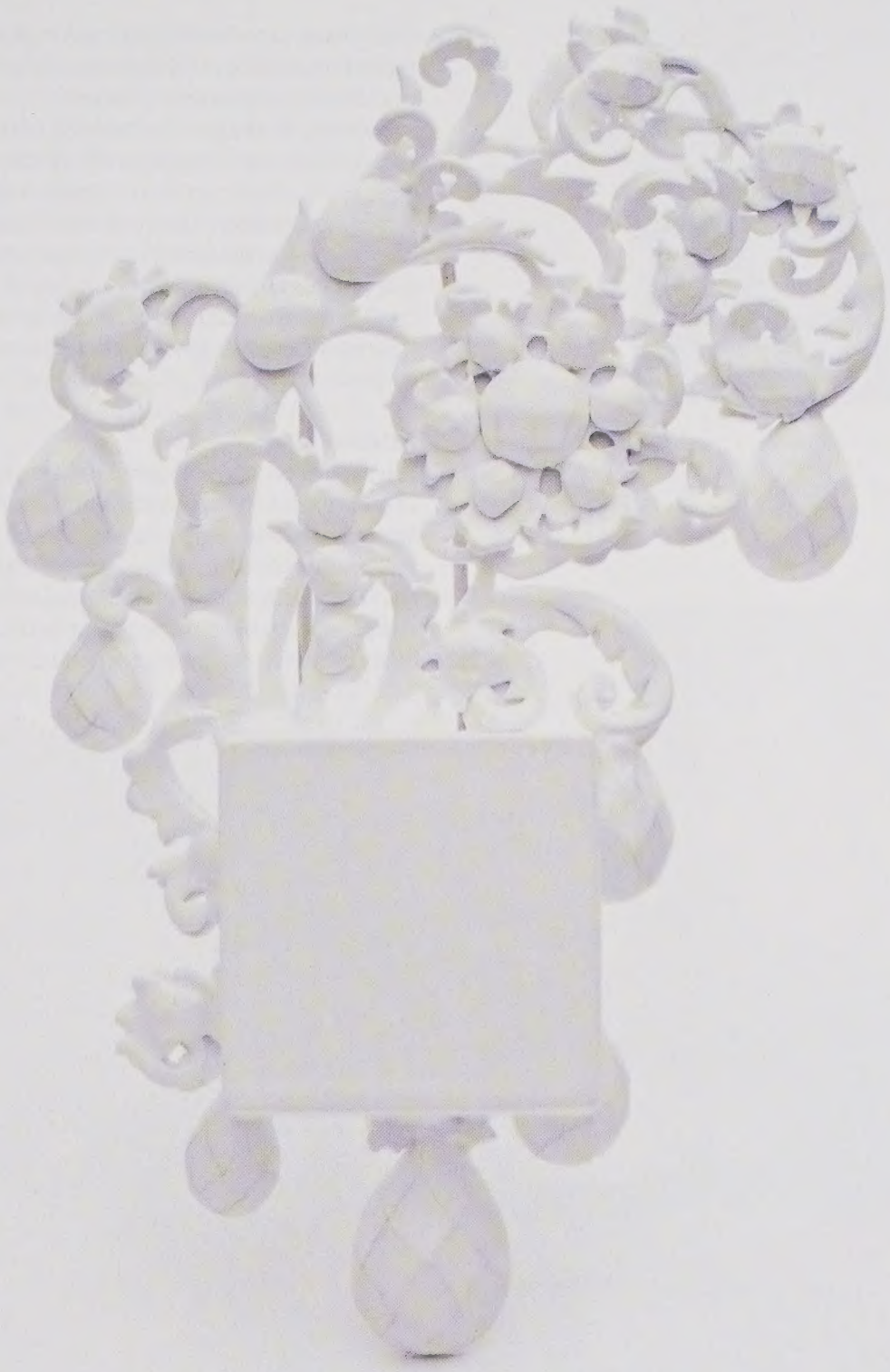
With her bandages printed with historical jewels, Ines Nunes maintains the integrity of the "image," at once luxurious and expendable, reverential and mocking—a self-conscious announcement of artifice. She describes them as "antibacterial jewelry"—good for you and the environment.

Rapp merges fashion and jewelry, Oye blends building and blocks, and Nunes elevates the printer to producer. All three forms—the t-shirt, toy, and sticker—reveal how artists employ the wearer's body, interactivity, and the freedom of placement to link preciousness to process.

Neutralizing Markers Of Luxury

The gem, a longtime centerpiece of luxurious jewelry, no longer needs to be present as a catalyst for conversation regarding value or status. The stone can be removed altogether, with the empty frame marking both its absence and imagined presence. Designers Giles & Brother cater to the sophisticated fashion world, selling their evacuated gemstone forms at high-end retailers such as Barneys. The work signals a new, strangely vacated type of heirloom jewelry for the jet set. Ornament today is about the frame, shell, or echo of that which no longer needs to be visible or present.

In a deliberate challenge to Alfred Loos, Constanz Schreiber's "Ornament and Crime" series uses fur cut into silhouettes of traditional, opulent jewelry to underscore the dichotomies between human and nature, luxury and crime, ornament and simple form. Here, fur and lead become the primary materials of brooches and collars that



ANYA KIVARKIS
Marcus Gunter sketch, ca.1711
(brooch), 2007
fine and sterling silver,
14k Palladium white gold,
enamel auto paint
3 ¼ x 2 ⅛ x ⅜"

physically and theoretically rattle the concepts of preciousness, beauty, and value associated with jewelry. Human beings have long used animal fur in dress and adornment, but Schreiber challenges the ornamental use of fur, relying upon the material's swirls and whorls to activate the objects. The resulting jewelry weighs heavily on the literal body and metaphorical mind. By implying the presence of gemstones via silhouette and pattern, the monetary "value" of a gemstone has been replaced with philosophical value, and something natural but coveted becomes both poetic but disquieting.

Yevgeniya Kaganovich takes on the iconic pearl necklace as a meditation on value, tradition, and ornament, by "blanking, silhouetting, inflating, or flattening" small pearls into images of large, perfect pearls. She does not simply create a pearl necklace but an image of a pearl necklace, and, in so doing, asks what has more value: the pearl itself or the idea of the pearl? A pearl can represent

Today's jewelers are enlisting traditionally valuable objects and connecting us to their historical origins, while simultaneously breaking down class barriers.

something rare and special, yet it can also be simulated and reproduced. What is more important: precious jewelry or the illusion of precious jewelry?

Jewelry is always constructed with a body in mind. Hisano Takei also explores the symbolic and physical presence of the iconic strand of pearls, especially how the pearl relates to the body. Her *Faux Pearl Necklace* is a configuration of wool pearls in varied sizes that wraps around the bodice. Not only does it play with the idea of the pearl itself but challenges the nature of ornament as design and structure relative to the body—not *merely* decorative, the necklace becomes a garment.

Altered Sites

Hardest to categorize, perhaps, are the artists who create work that relates to the body—but in ways that call attention to the body in space, or the body as a structural form on its own. Timothy Horn offers tantalizing jewelry that implicitly addresses the human body even while it is exploded in scale and moved on to the wall. Ornament (as decoration for the body, not as formal element) has become

LAUREN KALMAN
Lip Adornment, 2006
inkjet print of gold-plated electroformed copper, semi-precious stones
22 x 30"

decoration for architecture. Interested in the point at which "beauty becomes vulgar," Horn recently created unwearable "wall" jewelry that further challenges the limits of ornament. It is not just that the work is large (nearly three feet high) but it is also made of bronze, crystal, and foil—a doubling of its artificial nature.

Karin Seufert uses familiar materials such as leather and fabric to create oversized earrings, necklaces, and brooches that echo shapes and forms of historic jewelry. Manipulating bits and pieces into pendulous accumulations, Seufert stretches scale and obsessive construction to an extreme. The resulting piece is all about the structure and building process, taking ornament back into an architectural scale.

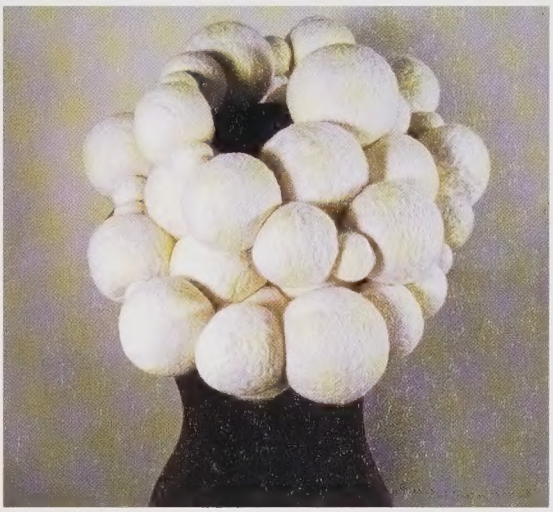
Lauren Kalman, by contrast, keeps her work "on the body," but removes any framing structure to contain the gems. Existing only as a photograph, *Lip Adornment* is a captivating yet grotesque image of "formless" desire.

Horn monumentalizes kitsch, questioning the line between taste and refinement by pushing the tacky into the body's physical realm. Seufert, too, extends ornament into architecture, using the body as a construction tool to achieve such scale. While the body is literally present in Kalman's work, it provides a lens through which the complex relationship between jewelry and form, ornament and space, in contemporary practice is revealed. Here, the body is both object and subject, and the relationship between desire and commodity is made most apparent.

Today's jewelers are enlisting traditionally valuable objects and connecting us to their historical origins, while simultaneously breaking down class barriers. That is not to say that this is a project about class—but that class plays a role, as do luxury and artifice. Typically ornament is perceived as superfluous, linked to concepts of artificiality, luxury, and excess. The material conversations generated by these artists challenge and play with that relevance as well as the notions of class—exemplifying the idea that ornament, today, is democratic. It conjures the story of John Lennon encouraging audience members in cheap seats to clap hands, while those in more expensive seats to "rattle their jewelry."

Contemporary art jewelry tends to remove the culturally charged aspects of colonial and imperial histories. Instead, the work functions in a manner similar to what David Cannadine posits in his 2002 book *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, a reclamation of the markers of luxury and a redefinition of those markers within a contemporary context. Class and status remain relevant, but "bling" becomes individualized, personalized—making the cost of the materials less important. If you can "make it your own," who cares if it is made of 22k gold and Tahitian pearls? And if you can make it from copying a picture without addressing cultural history, who cares how that gold was mined? Thus, the work becomes about class and access—not culture and race—and is ironically liberated in this redefinition.

YEVGENIYA KAGANOVICH
Pearl Necklace X, 2006
potato pearls, silicone rubber, sterling silver, silk thread
8 ½ x 9 ½ x ½"



HISANO TAKEI
Faux Pearl Necklace, 2006
wool, string
60 x 4 x 5"

"Ornament" is enduring, despite its apparent lack of function. The current academic interest in ornament suggests that regardless of popular opinion, theoretical framework, or ultimate form, the human desire to adorn is innate.

INES NUNES
Penso, 2007
self-adhesive bandages, stamping film
dimensions variable

A New Proposition For Ornament

"Construction should be decorated. Decoration should never be purposely constructed."
Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, 1856

Many contemporary artists across media have gleefully challenged Owen Jones's statement. As Patricia Flores notes in a recent College Art Association call for papers, "Adorning our bodies, clothing, dwellings, and objects, ornament has functioned as a messenger for our human experience for thousands of years." "Ornament" is enduring, despite its apparent lack of function. The current academic interest in ornament suggests that regardless of popular opinion, theoretical framework, or ultimate form, the human desire to adorn is innate. The consistent thread in support of ornament emphasizes "ornament as essential to the human condition… [and as a means of facilitating] a fuller appreciation of the natural world—the source of most decorative motifs."[3]

When ornament becomes a subject (a new "baroque," for instance)—recognizable historic forms such as scrollwork, arabesques, filigree, arcs, loops, and drops are purposefully abstracted, flattened, enlarged, diminished, and reconstituted. The past becomes an almost limitless resource—with each choice reflecting a particular viewpoint. A glance at visual and media culture today reveals a broader interest in presenting ideas and concepts considered "traditional" within a modern context. Explicit in such ahistorical conversations is the affirmation of a formal relationship with a historical past; implicit is a consideration of social and cultural meanings. What does it mean when mostly female contemporary art jewelers recontextualize ideas and objects of anonymous and most likely male craftspeople? How is the concept of luxury formulated today and by whom?

The artists considered in this article emphasize a "Western" past, drawing upon markers of luxury once associated with the aristocrats of seventeenth-century French courts, imperial leaders, and the extravagantly wealthy. The "traditional" jewelry referenced is drawn from this lineage: when ornament was lavish and intricate, and jewels were modified and copied over time and space. Today, these symbols and markers of royal and unattainable wealth are sampled and reconfigured, while retaining an echo of their original grandeur.

A deconstruction or re-orientation of historical elements in contemporary jewelry includes not only a consideration of recognizable forms in "new" materials and modes, but a challenge to the makeup of the jewel itself. Often this challenge extends to the social and cultural systems that perpetuated the use of certain materials within jewelry, especially as a sign of intangibles such as wealth, power, taste, or class.

Today's jewelry is intrinsically tied to work that was produced in years past. It is *about* jewelry, yet it is also about those who made it, for whom, when, and why. This is only one skein of a larger web that links contemporary art jewelry to its historical past. For example, Lola Brooks,

TIMOTHY HORN
I Want Candy (installed), 2001
nickel plated bronze,
cast lead crystal, Easter egg foil
35 ½ x 25 ½ x 4"
COURTESY HOSFELT GALLERY,
SAN FRANCISCO AND NEW YORK

Melanie Bilenker, Lauren Blais, and Sharon Portelance have all created series that investigate Victorian mourning and/or hair jewelry. These artists are interested in personal narratives, stories, and memories that connect the private and public, resulting in objects weighted by individual histories yet linked to broad cultural interests.

The artists explored in this article, however, distill history. If there is a personal historical connection, it is removed by the maker. In such deliberate mining of jewelry history, there is an underlying reverence for the past. But there is rarely an immediate link to the historical object serving as the impetus for the contemporary piece. Many rely on images as source material, rather than on objects from their lives. This leaves room for mutation, fragmentation, and other transformations of an "original" image that would be too emotional and difficult with a personal object. Extracting history in this removed way lends an openness and currency to these projects, and reveals fresh and exciting approaches to ornament as form, *and* as object and subject.

Lena Vigna is curator of exhibitions, Miami University Art Museum, Oxford, Ohio.

Namita Gupta Wiggers is curator, Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon.

1. For further discussion see Steven Skov Holt and Mara Holt Skov, "Ornament Decriminalized," *ID*, March/April 2007.
2. Julie Lasky in "Returning to the Scene of the Crime: Ornament's Renaissance Show how much tastes have changed in a century. No, make that a decade," *ID*, June 2007, p 16.
3. Toni Greenbaum, "An Argument for Ornament: The Jewelry of Vera Siemund," *Metalsmith* vol.25, no.5, 2005, p. 28.

Reviews

Mark Vaarwerk: Retrospective

Metalab, Sydney, Australia
November 6–30, 2008

by Tracey Clement

After ten years of critically acclaimed practice, Australian studio jeweler Mark Vaarwerk finally had his first solo exhibition. Titled "Retrospective," the show makes clear that Vaarwerk is looking back; as a maker, he is peering over his shoulder, not only at his own work, but also at the history of jewelry itself. Vaarwerk's bright, plastic-fantastic rings, brooches, and bangles have a sleek pop art edge. Their colorful concentric rings pay homage to Jasper Johns's iconic target paintings as filtered through Carnaby Street's swinging '60s fashion, and their luscious candy colors, rendered deliberately in non-precious materials, reflect the bygone buoyant optimism of the late '60s and early '70s.

During this all-too-brief era, young people and artists really thought they could change the world. Socially conscious jewelers, particularly in Europe and the United States, explored the use of cheap and unconventional materials in an attempt to highlight aesthetic input over intrinsic value and to create egalitarian wearables, accessible to more than the moneyed few. This movement was named, documented, and championed by Peter Dormer and Ralph Turner in their seminal 1985 book, *The New Jewelry: Trends & Traditions*, and its influence on subsequent generations of art school–educated jewelers was monumental.

Even though he was trained as a jeweler in Sydney, Australia, at the tail end of the "greed is good" '90s, Vaarwerk's practice was to a large extent shaped by the New Jewelry ethos. For the last decade his primary material has been non-precious, to say the very least. Not only is it not considered valuable, it has actually already been discarded by the time he gets to it. Vaarwerk uses both High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) and Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE) rescued from the garbage bins of friends, neighbors, and local businesses. Aside from their sterling silver accents and findings, his jewels are 100 percent recycled, made from plastic shopping bags and shampoo, milk, and yogurt bottles. In this way, Vaarwerk's work also seems to slot neatly into a current trend: the growing awareness that as consumers we need to use less of the planet's dwindling resources.

But even though his wearables embody both the conditions of the present and a legacy of the not-so-distant past, Vaarwerk is also inspired by prehistory. It was a desire to go back to jewelry basics that prompted his initial experiments with plastics. In 1997, while still a student, Vaarwerk was looking for a way to put a contemporary spin on the millennia-old beads-on-a-string jewelry concept. And the way he works today is still most closely aligned to the anonymous ancient craftspeople, who first fashioned this type of necklace: taking readily available materials (often, as with bone and shell, the remnants of meals) and transforming them into adornment. As an urban citizen, Vaarwerk's food comes via the supermarket in plastic bags, and the most easily accessible, free material is consumer detritus.

Vaarwerk taught himself simple spinning techniques in order to use the materials that came naturally to a city dweller. After trying such unlikely candidates as cotton balls, the inner fibrous cores of felt tip markers, fur shaved off tennis balls, and cassette tape, he found that plastic shopping bags had the most potential and the added attraction of coming in a variety of colors. He also felt instinctively that his reuse of this ubiquitous, throwaway item would resonate with his fellow urbanites, and he was right. Vaarwerk's brightly colored spun shopping bag strings interwoven with small metal elements, his signature style "beads without holes," launched his career as jeweler in the contemporary Australian scene.

As more and more people have gotten into the habit of

Wella Whorl Brooch, 2008
plastic shampoo bottles, plastic shopping bags, sterling silver, stainless steel
diameter 1 ¾"

Beads without Holes Necklace, 2006
hand spun plastic shopping bags, 18k gold
length 16 ½"

Ajax Ring, 2008
plastic floor cleaner bottle, plastic shopping bags, sterling silver
height 1"

bringing their own reusable bags, and major supermarkets have switched to biodegradable plastic bags for those who forgot theirs at home, what used to be Vaarwerk's primary free material has gradually become scarce, and therefore precious in the traditional sense. Ever the innovator, he now works mostly with plastic bottles, and hopefully, as ecological awareness continues to rise, these jewels too will soon be seen as precious in more ways than one.

Tracey Clement is an artist and writer living in Sydney, Australia.

Imperishable Beauty: Art Nouveau Jewelry

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
July 23–November 9, 2008

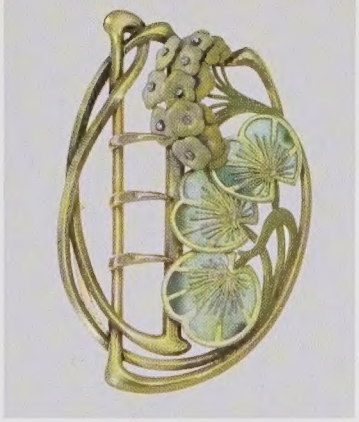
by Patricia Harris and David Lyon

Curator Yvonne Markowitz confesses to spending a year with magnifiers as she worked on this stunning exhibition of Art Nouveau jewelry, which was drawn primarily from an anonymous private collection assembled over five decades. "Art Nouveau," she says, "raised the bar on technical craftsmanship and capability," and the sheer virtuosity and skill of these jewelers continues to marvel her.

The exhibition features more than 100 objects, over half exhibited for the first time. As a survey of the Art Nouveau movement from its late-nineteenth-century origins in France and Belgium to its sudden passing from fashion with the outbreak of World War I, the exhibition necessarily relies on the discerning tastes of the collectors. They do not disappoint. The bulk of the collection dates from around 1900, generally considered the high-water mark of the short-lived movement. Moreover, more than 40 pieces on display are creations of René Lalique, the seminal figure in Art Nouveau jewelry, which was his primary artistic focus from 1880 until he turned almost exclusively to glass in 1914.

While the roughly contemporary Arts and Crafts movement manifested a philosophy of medieval revivalism espoused by John Ruskin and William Morris, Art Nouveau took its aesthetic cues more from the Gallic exaltation of the imagination championed by Baudelaire and the Symbolistes. Art Nouveau was first and foremost a craftsmen's movement that emphasized technical virtuosity, sinuous lines drawn from nature, flamboyant imagery, and passionate sensuality.

Art Nouveau jewelry was hardly a democratic art form. Leading designers like Georges Fouquet catered to a well-heeled clientele. They often created showpiece works that were only marginally wearable, such as Fouquet's 1901 *Orchid Brooch*. These technical tours-de-force were designed by master artists and realized in studios of craft specialists, each of whom would execute one component of the final work. Yet this rarefied, often precious, movement broke with traditional jewelry by devoting itself to beauty, not intrinsic value.



HENRI VEVER
Belt Buckle with Lily Pads and Blossoms, ca. 1900
gold, enamel, diamond
PHOTO: © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

From Lalique forward, Art Nouveau jewelers rejected what they called "the tyranny of the diamond," often employing humble materials. The jewelers exploited the colors of semi-precious and common stones and the sculptural plasticity of horn and ivory. Around 1890, Lalique began experimenting with various enameling techniques to create his own "jewels," and many of his contemporaries followed suit.

Lalique's *Hair Comb with Ivy Leaves* (1902–03), for example, employs horn as a base for mounting a spiral jewel assembly of sapphires, gold, and enamel. Horn is used in an even more innovative way in the circa-1900 *Butterfly Brooch* attributed to Louis Aucoc, Lalique's teacher and first employer. The designer liberally uses emeralds, sapphires, and rubies, but the curling wings with a reticulated surface are masterfully created from horn, and the gems are almost overwhelmed by the adjacent bright cloisonné enamels. Similarly, a 1904 *Dragonfly Pendant-Brooch* by Belgian artist Philippe Wolfers includes a segmented body of pearls, several small diamonds, and some splendid rubies, but the feathery wings are a fragile tour-de-force example of translucent *plique à jour* (backless) enamel, a hallmark of Art Nouveau style.

The exhibition reflects the three major strains of Art Nouveau imagery: flora, fauna, and the human figure. Ironically his final category, often representing erotically posed female figures in *pate de verre*, seems as dated today as it was adventurous in its time. By contrast, the wild tangles of vines, frankly sexual orchid flowers, and the beautifully angular peacocks, swans, and swallows still

GEORGES FOUQUET
Orchid Brooch, 1901
gold, enamel, diamond, pearl
PHOTO: © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

RENÉ LALIQUE
Hair Comb with Ivy Leaves, 1902–03
gold, enamel, sapphire, horn
PHOTO: © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

seem freshly imagined.

A century after its heyday, Art Nouveau appears like the final gasp of the French love affair with rococo ornament, but the specific pieces in this exhibition transcend the art movement. Some pieces, such as the 1900 *Belt Buckle with Lily Pads and Blossoms* by Henri Vever, prefigure the Modern movement by melding exacting depiction with pure abstraction. The aesthetic tension keeps the eye jumping around the tiny composition. What is not obvious is that the back of the buckle has impressed ants and an eagle's head on the hinge. It is almost as if Vever knew some other jeweler would examine it long after he was dead and see the marks of one artist speaking to another across the years.

Patricia Harris and David Lyon are critics living in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The Thinking Body

Jordan Schnitzer
Museum of Art
University of Oregon, Eugene
June 26–September 7, 2008

San Francisco Museum of
Craft + Design
October 17, 2008–January 4, 2009

by Jennifer Cross Gans

Small but ambitious exhibitions like this one can present challenges both for the organizers and the visiting public. According to curators Kate Wagle and Anya Kirvakis, "The Thinking Body" examines "new ways of understanding how we perceive the body and how the body interacts with the world around it." These concepts certainly merit in-depth exploration; the difficulty is how to best stage this exploration in a relatively limited space. Should the curators focus on one or two areas, or try to cover a broader range without leaving the audience feeling either shortchanged or bewildered?

GERD ROTHMANN
Four–Finger–Bangle, 1992
gold
1 3/4 x 2 3/4"

GIJS BAKKER
Adam (necklace) 1988
gold plated brass, color photo, PVC
diameter 12 1/4"

This show tried, not always successfully, to do a bit of both. It offered 23 works by 9 different artists, and included small sculptures, framed or wall-mounted pieces, and jewelry. All the works were well crafted by artists with major national and international reputations. However, while individually innovative, the objects did not always speak to each other, nor often directly to the exhibition's aim.

Several pieces presented Tinkerbell-sized houses, one brooch titled *House*, in paper and hard foam by Otto Künzli, and the mixed media, wall-mounted *Hideaways* and *Small Views* by Lauren Fensterstock. While these were delightful to look at, seeing them in the light of "The Thinking Body" was a stretch.

Myra Mimlitch-Gray's work steered the viewer in a different direction. Her two encased teapots revealed the imprint left by common objects, illustrating the hidden complexities of positive and negative space.

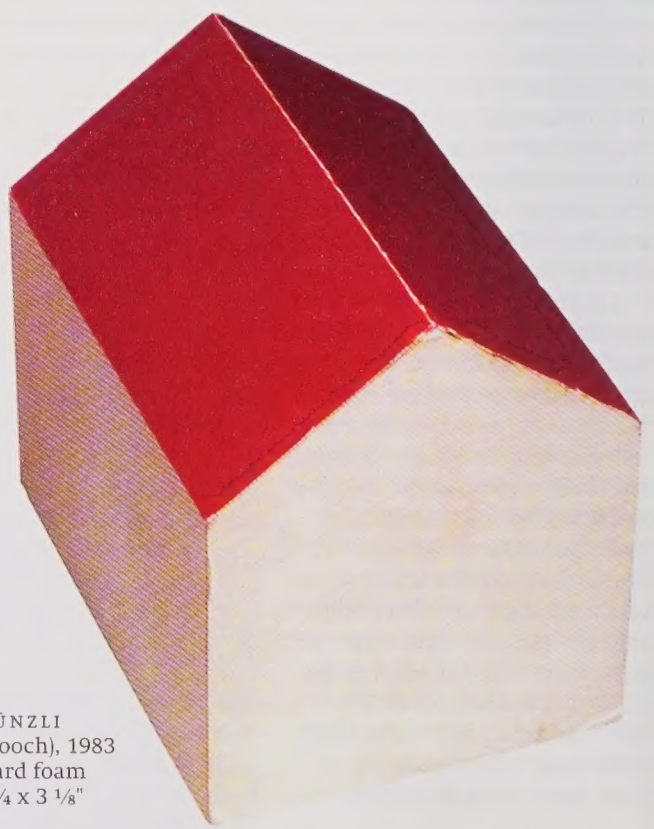
Three framed pieces by Cornelia Parker were technically interesting, pleasingly tangled masses of fine silver wire. However, one needed to read the captions–*Measuring Liberty with the Dollar; Pulled Tooth Drawing*; and *Beyond Belief-Gold Crucifix Drawn into Wire*—to make any sense of them.

Gjis Bakker's neckpieces, created from 1982 onwards from manipulated or laminated photographs, with occasional touches of precious metals and diamonds, spoke more directly to the show's theme of bodily perception. It was a pleasure revisiting his iconic athletes, the *Adam* necklace, and the ever-gorgeous *Dewdrop Neckpiece*. Also on script was Melanie Bilenker's wistful jewelry created from ivory piano key laminate and resin, framed in silver or gold, with fine line drawings rendered in hair.

A couple of works were (perhaps intentionally) unsettling. Gerd Rothmann, well known for his precious metal casts of human appendages, created a *Four–Finger–Bangle*, with deep imprints suggesting a grip on a wrist made in anger or possessiveness. Janine Antoni's *Umbilical* presented a sterling silver spoon being consumed by a hungry mouth.

First-time or casual viewers are likely to have some difficulty with "The Thinking Body," and some of the writing both in the catalogue and the exhibition texts was unfortunately turgid. The ideas raised in the show are important enough to warrant amplification, rather than a quick dip into what felt like curatorial shorthand.

Jennifer Cross Gans is a studio jeweler and writer based in San Francisco.



OTTO KÜNZLI
House (brooch), 1983
paper, hard foam
2 7/8 x 2 3/4 x 3 1/8"

HAI-CHI JIHN
Bridal Gloves, 2000
silver plated brass,
fine and sterling silver
each 11 x 5 x 3/8"

Women of Metal

Crossman Gallery, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
September 9–October 18, 2008

by Frank C. Lewis

A running joke among some curators is that every broadly themed exhibition should be subtitled "Things I Like." Most survey topics are far too expansive to cover everything and everybody, and thus the final selections often come down to one's favorites. When I first heard of "Women of Metal," I thought, here we go again. But surprisingly and fortunately, I was wrong.

Instead of narrowing their choices with either predictable lists or quirky discoveries, curators Teresa Faris and Susan Messer decided to feature female metalsmiths who have been involved in college and university level education in Wisconsin. An introductory timeline listed schools and the tenures of all of the 33 metalsmiths featured in the exhibition.

Additonal signage did an excellent job of putting the works in a broader stylistic and historical context. The contemporary pieces were admittedly less easy to contextualize, and many first-time viewers may well wonder how stylized and abstracted doorknobs (by Teresa Faris) or Nugold belly buttons (from Yuyen Chang) connect to the tradition of finely crafted brooches. But the selected works were of excellent quality and fully representative of the variety of strategies in modern and contemporary metalwork. Overall, the exhibition design was sensitive and considerate of the individual works, and the spatial relationship between pieces offered numerous opportunities for comparison and dialogue between objects.

Usually I shy away from using terms like "classic," but perusing the exhibition I couldn't help thinking that artists such as Eleanor Moty, Agnes Chwae, and Paulette Werger have created pieces that will seem forever contemporary. Moty's brooches of reticulated quartz and fine silver are a kind of modernism that never looks dated or era-specific. Chwae, too, echoes a formal purity that appears to be informed by knowledge of the history of holloware.

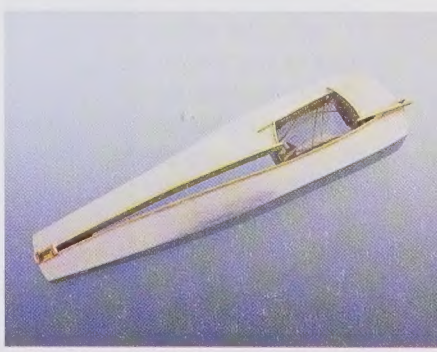
Other works like Mary Tingley's *Necklace* (1970–79) or Yumi Roth's *Pile on, Pile off* (1998), for example, seemed rooted to particular epochs in which metalsmiths were reacting to a fairly recent past, an experimental, dare one say avant-garde strategy that sought to overthrow old orders and technical practices. This is not an indictment of the quality of Tingley's or Roth's works, and as an art historian I would find these objects far more instructive when trying to get students to understand the historical contingencies of object making. For a show of this scope, a curatorial focus on so-called "classic works" could well become boring.

If there was a criterion in evidence, other than geography, it was exquisite craftsmanship. Experimental (or do we now just use the rubric "postmodern"?) work, especially that which rejects traditional materials (precious metals, gems, etc.) often lacks the finish and attention to detail that separates good metalsmithing programs from mere departments in small-scale sculpture. And while craftspersons such as Kim Cridler, Susie Ganch, Martha Glowacki, Yevgeniya Kaganovich, and the aforementioned Roth, among others, employ such things as Styrofoam, mild steel, and desiccated birds, they never embrace the cast-off and trash aesthetic so popular in contemporary sculpture.

An exhibition of this nature also highlights the fact that college and university programs encourage a materials- and practice-based critique of the discipline of metalsmithing. Without such an academic environment I find it hard to believe that the astute and intelligent work of artists like Lisa Gralnick or Hai-Chi Jihn could be sustained. While high-end galleries may sometimes display such conceptually significant work, they still have a bottom line, and particularly in the present financial environment, it is often only in an academic setting that metalsmiths can afford such explorations.

"Women of Metals" makes clear that higher education programs can serve as important hothouses for the

ELEANOR MOTY
Arroyo Brooch, 2000
sterling silver, 18k gold,
rutilated quartz, sapphire
4 x 1 x 3/8"



nurturing of both wearable jewelry and the dialogue that will help to move the field forward.

Frank C. Lewis is the director and curator of exhibitions of the Wriston Art Galleries at Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin.

Gary Griffin: Master Metalsmith

National Ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis, Tennessee
October 10–November 10, 2008

by Andria Lisle

Strategy, materials, process, and chance: Texas-born, New Mexico–based artist Gary Griffin uses these four elements to inform, but not dictate, his work. To create the "Penumbra Series," Griffin spent four cold winter months in 2007 at the Kohler Company's 245,000-square-foot forge in Wisconsin. There, as a resident artist in the John Michael Kohler Arts Center Art and Industry Program, he created 18 ductile cast iron frames that house "portraits" of iron that has been molted, then arrested as cool, dark forms. The resulting abstract images are as readable as Rorschach's ink blots: a stunning array of demonic faces, hand shadow puppets, and eagle's wings seem to leap off the once molten, now brittle "canvases," which feature serendipitous pockmarks and swirls.

Although similar in structure to the "Penumbra Series," Griffin's "Fracture Series," created during his recent tenure as Master Metalsmith at the National Ornamental Metal Museum, is, stylistically at least, its polar opposite. These works look red-hot and rusted, as if they may have been torn off a combat tank abandoned on some long-forgotten battlefield. These "canvases" have been punctured, twisted, and pummeled into form, leaving raw haloes of color and, on occasion, rough shards sticking out of the frame to create vast shadows. Compared to the passively composed eddies of the "Penumbra Series," this ironwork has a decidedly aggressive attitude.

The two series straddle a continuum that spans the history of humankind. On one hand, Griffin's work seems as primitive as the Lascaux cave paintings; on the other, it could be exhibited on Clavius Base, the futuristic moon settlement featured in the 1968 movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Like Stanley Kubrick's film, the work draws on mysticism and alchemy even as it nimbly addresses the dual advancements of technology and human evolution.

For *Periodic Gaze*, Griffin borrows from the periodic table to forge a layman-like 28-tile topographical chart that documents the materials of his craft, from gold to cadmium, magnesium to lead. The final piece, which is framed in white and lays flat on the ground, begs to be touched by fingers (or toes), tracing the paths and rivulets that surround each chemical element.

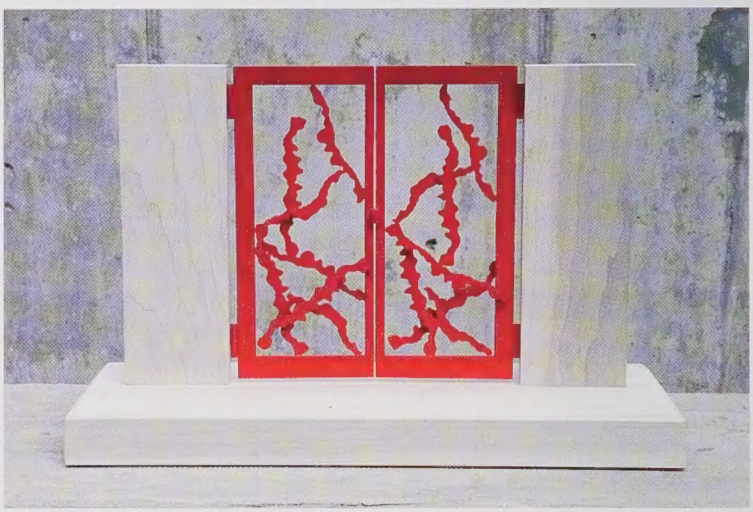
The exhibit is completed by a series of scale models of ornamental gates, ranging from the mind-bendingly perfect *Perspective Gate*, an optical illusion of a brick path that seems to delicately hang in mid-air; to *Rose Fence*, a graceful form that fuses two seemingly incompatible mindsets—the sprawl of the natural world and austere modernity—with flair. Once again, works like *Acanthus Rojo Gates* and *Bronze Doors* play with the prehistoric-futuristic duality, using primitive forms to create fully functional, timeless art.

The precision and flawlessness of Griffin's craft, as represented in these scale models, makes it easy to forget that these pieces were created with human hands. Each brick post in *Rose Fence* is meticulously measured, the thorn on every rose exactly placed, until the strict geometric balance eventually gives way to a row of freeform weed stalks. Similar dichotomies occur in the latter two gates, which play airiness and light against somber, weighty forms in what might be read as an earnest spiritual discussion. *Acanthus Rojo Gates* is constructed from forms that resemble the spiny branches of the Mediterranean acanthus plant, which, according to theologians, were used by Roman soldiers to create Jesus's thorny crown, while the heavy, tectonic plate–inspired *Bronze Doors* are reminiscent of the stone that marked Christ's tomb. On a more secular note, Griffin has used ancient shapes and symbols that would, nonetheless, hardly be out of place on a twenty-first-century modernist structure.

By using engineering fundamentals, technical skills, and the eye of a born aesthete, Gary Griffin has created a superlative body of work.

Andria Lisle is author of the book Waking Up in Memphis, *and an arts reviewer for the* Commercial Appeal *newspaper.*

Rock Entry Doors (scale model), 1999
basswood, bronze
12 x 12 x ½"



Acanthus Rojo Gates (scale model), 2006
poplar wood, powder coated steel
10 5/8 x 16 x 5 ½"

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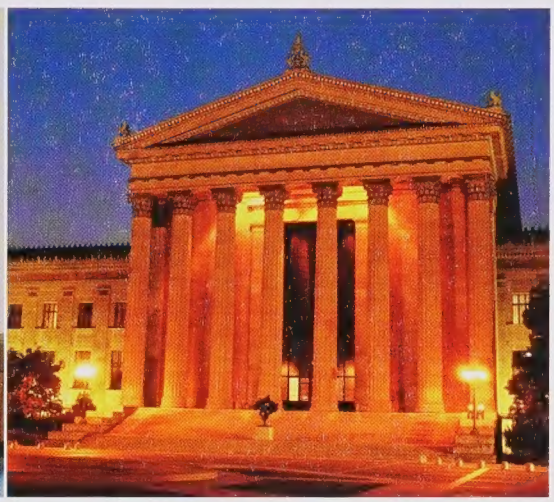
BY DANA SINGER

Guests at the Philadelphia launch party for Metalsmith*'s redesign, January 2009*

Kiff Slemmons, the newest member of Metalsmith*'s Editorial Advisory Committee*

PHOTO: ROD SLEMMONS



The Philadelphia Museum of Art, site of events for SNAG's 2009 conference.

PHOTO: B. KRIST FOR GREATER PHILADELPHIA TOURISM MARKETING CORPORATION

Metalsmith Launch Party in Philadelphia

SNAG hosted a party at University of the Arts in Philadelphia to celebrate the relaunch of *Metalsmith*, which coincided with the meeting of its Editorial Advisory Committee. Special guests included artists Marjorie Simon and Bruce Metcalf, and gallery owners Ruth and Rick Snyderman. The new designer and art director of *Metalsmith* is the visionary Luke Hayman of Pentagram, one of the most esteemed designers in the publications field today.

Erratum

We regret that Charon Kransen's last name was misspelled in the "Look" department of *Metalsmith*'s Vol.29, No. 1 issue.

Editorial Advisory Committee Welcomes Kiff Slemmons

The Editorial Advisory Committee of *Metalsmith* welcomes its newest member, artist Kiff Slemmons. A self-taught metalsmith, Kiff has exhibited nationally and internationally for more than 30 years. She is best known for conceptual work using non-precious materials and found objects, and recently collaborated with a local group of artisans in Oaxaca, Mexico, to produce paper jewelry. Kiff joins current EAC members Sharon Church, Kim Cridler, Ursula Ilse-Neuman, SNAG board liaison Sandie Zilker, and editor Suzanne Ramljak. SNAG sincerely thanks departing EAC member Mija Riedel for her participation and dedication. Sharon Church continues as Chair of the Committee.

Jewelry in Motion at Philadelphia Museum of Art

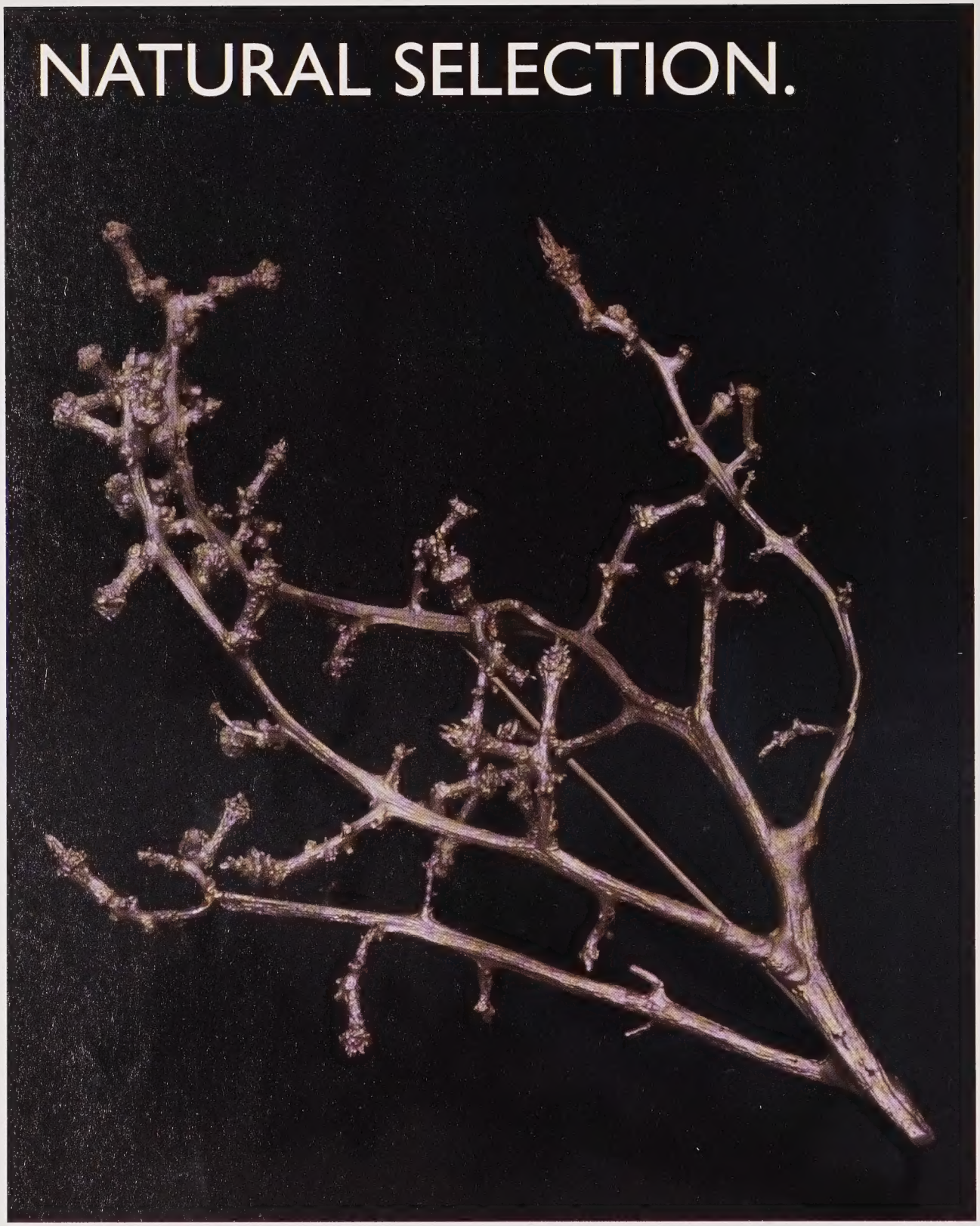
To celebrate the SNAG conference attendees in Philadelphia from May 20 to 23, the Women's Committee of the Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show and SNAG hosted an exclusive evening at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The centerpiece of the evening was a fashion show on the Grand Staircase titled "Jewelry in Motion," curated by Gail M. Brown, and an exhibition of metalwork from the museum's permanent collection, curated by Elisabeth Agro, Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Decorative Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Metalsmith Wins National Gold Ink Awards for Fourth Consecutive Year

Publishing Executive (a leading trade magazine for the magazine and publication market) and *Printing Impressions* (a leading trade magazine for the commercial printing market), co-sponsors of the Annual Gold Ink Awards, announced that *Metalsmith* won two awards in the Trade Magazine Web Printing Category.

Metalsmith's printer, St. Croix Press, submitted both the "Exhibition in Print 2007" curated by Ellen Lupton, and Vol. 28, No. 2, which featured the work of Mariko Kusumoto, Peter Chang, John Marshall, and Israeli jewelers.

NATURAL SELECTION.



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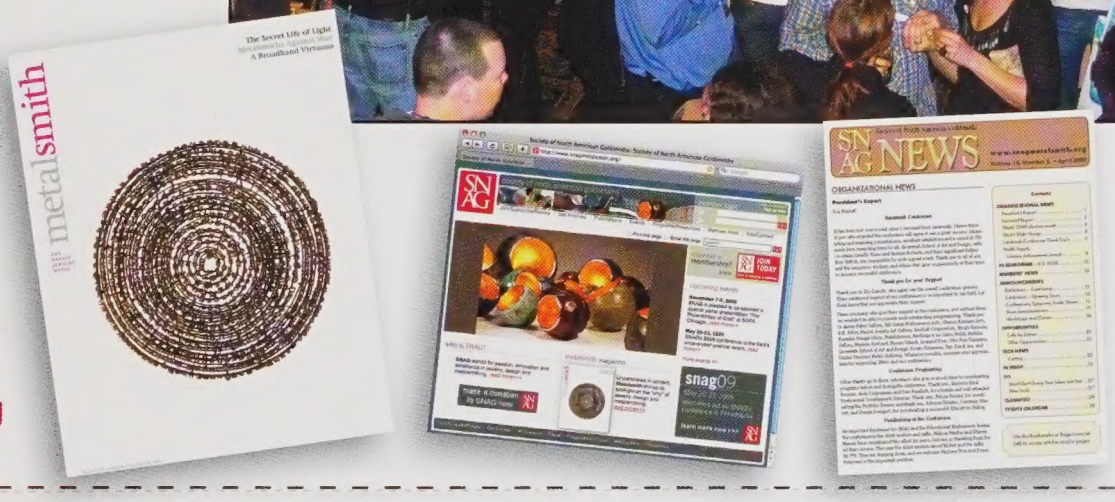

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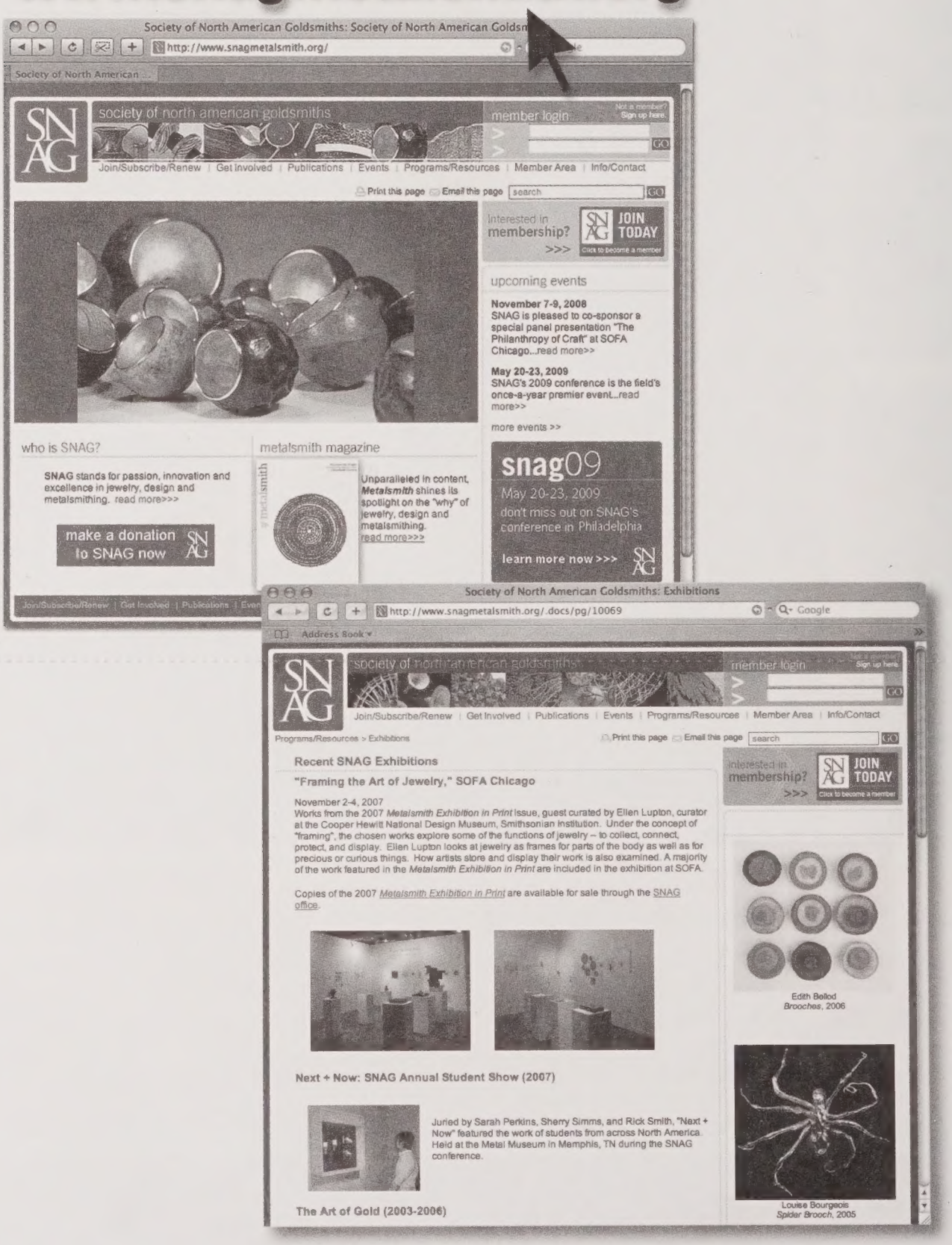
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Recent SNAG Exhibitions
"Framing the Art of Jewelry," SOFA Chicago
November 2-4, 2007
Works from the 2007 Metalsmith Exhibition in Print issue, guest curated by Ellen Lupton, curator at the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution. Under the concept of "framing", the chosen works explore some of the functions of jewelry -- to collect, connect, protect, and display. Ellen Lupton looks at jewelry as frames for parts of the body as well as for precious or curious things. How artists store and display their work is also examined. A majority of the work featured in the Metalsmith Exhibition in Print are included in the exhibition at SOFA.
Copies of the 2007 Metalsmith Exhibition in Print are available for sale through the SNAG office.
Next + Now: SNAG Annual Student Show (2007)
Juried by Sarah Perkins, Sherry Simms, and Rick Smith, "Next + Now" featured the work of students from across North America. Held at the Metal Museum in Memphis, TN during the SNAG conference.
The Art of Gold (2003-2006)
Edith Bellod
Brooches, 2006
Louise Bourgeois
Spider Brooch, 2005

possible gemstones for bracelet:
Aquamarine
Jade
*Amazonite
Azurite
Turquoise
bracelet clasp detail
"Caribbean Shoreline" May 19, 2003 – St. Thomas
Inspiration #5
matte silver leaf
amazonite
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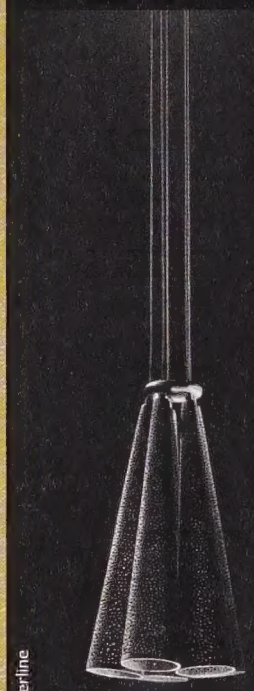

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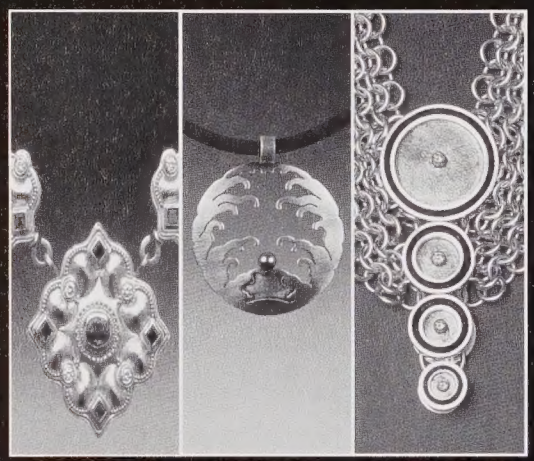

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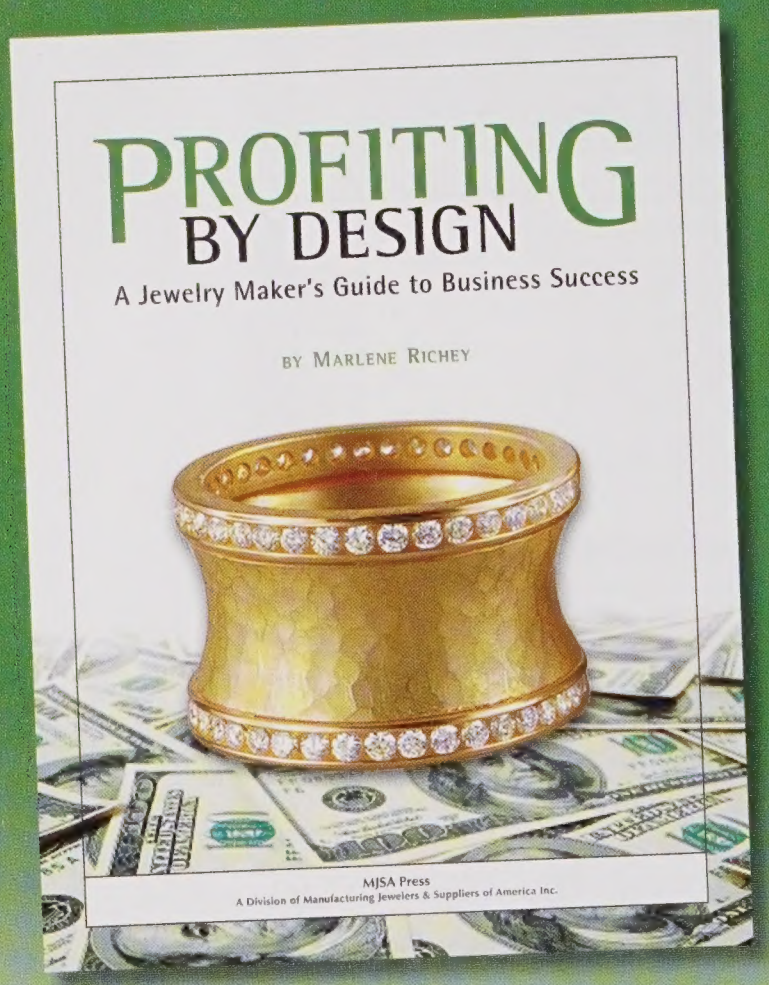
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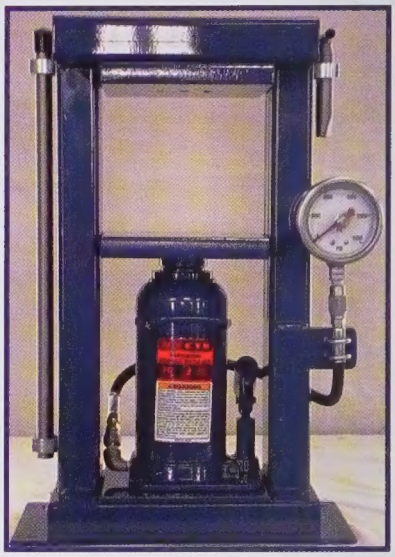

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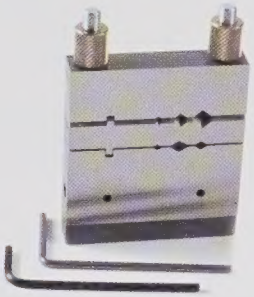

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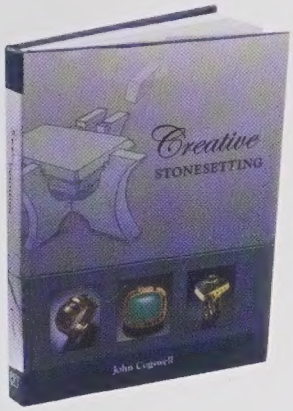

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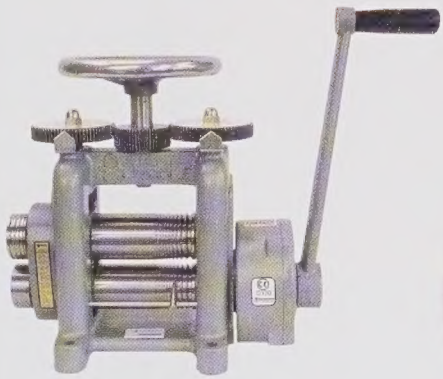

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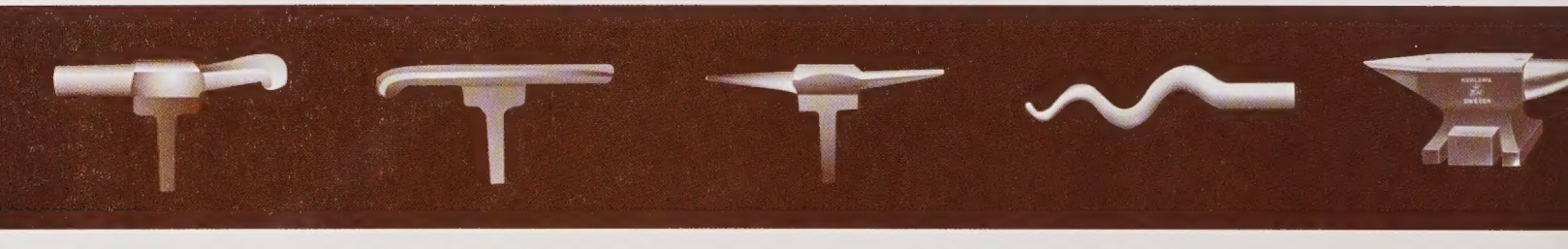

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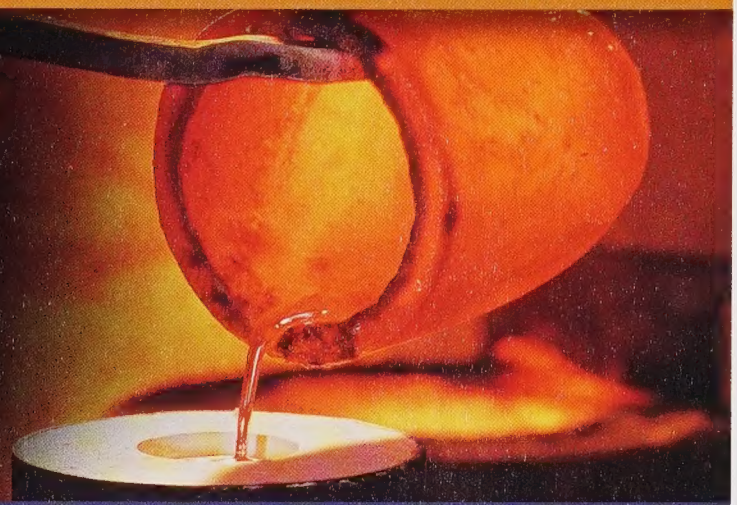

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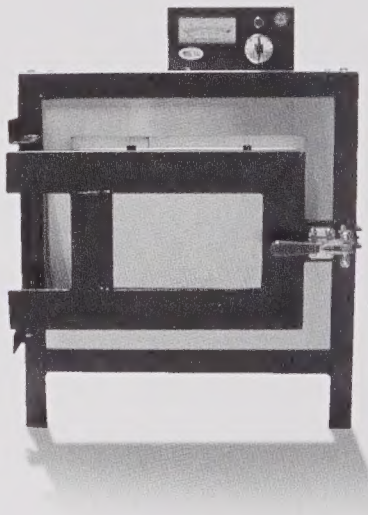

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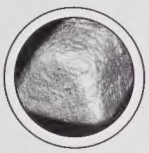

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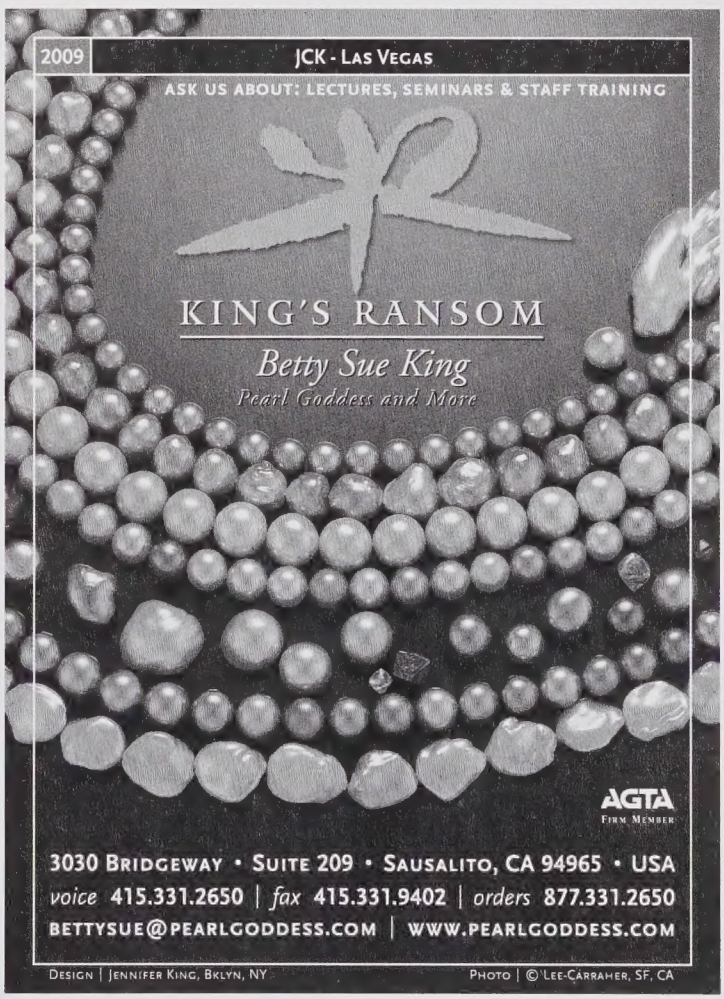
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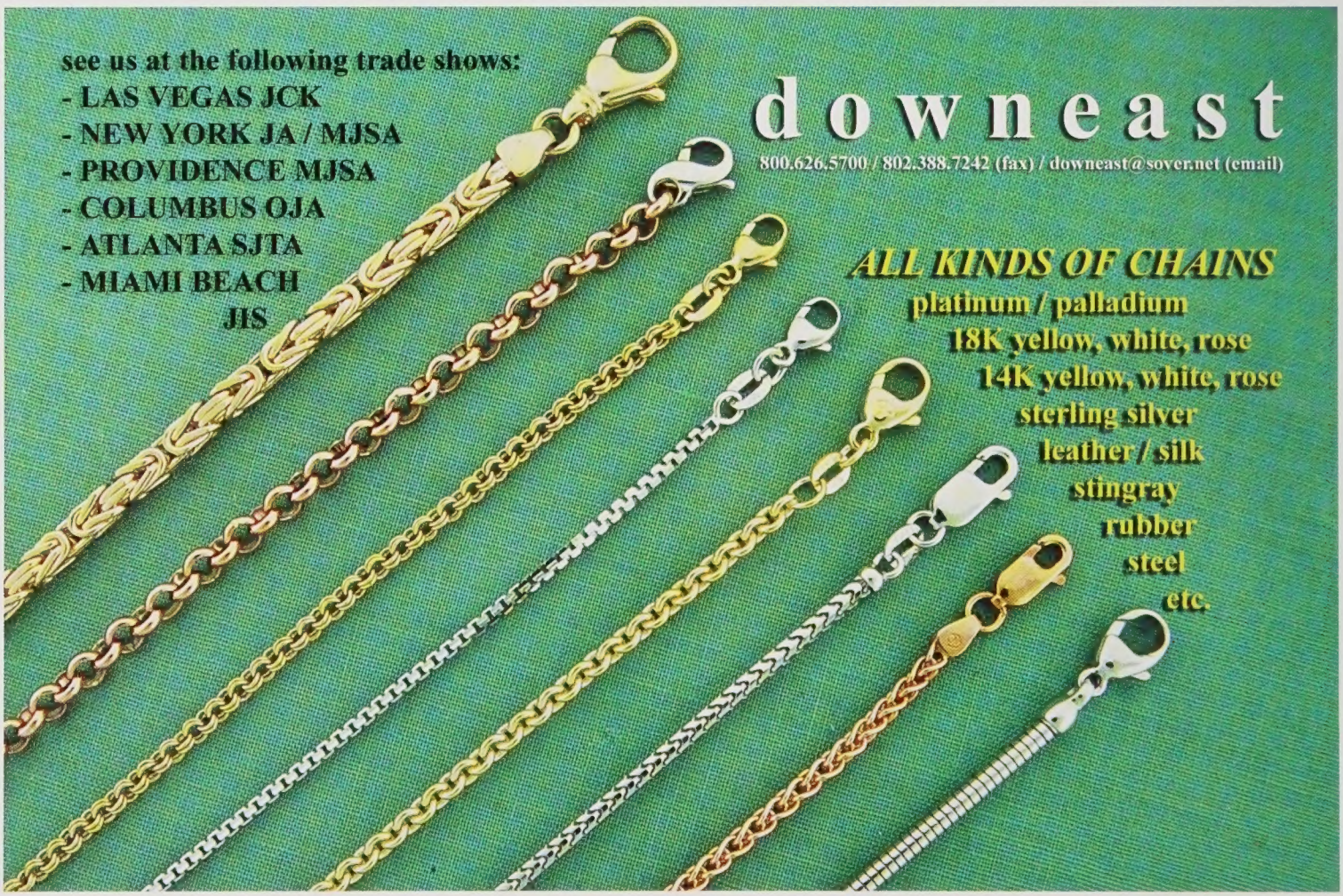

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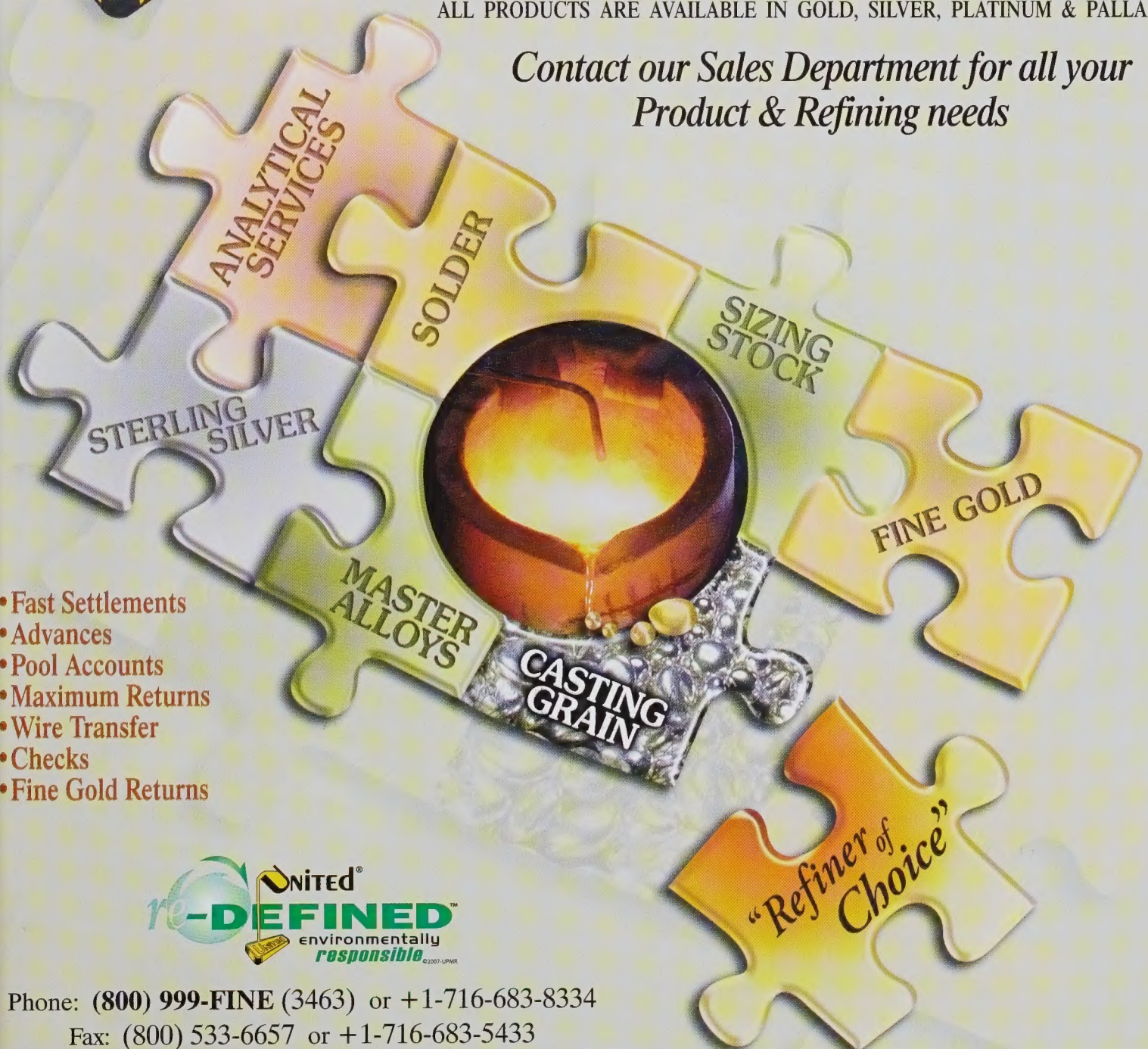

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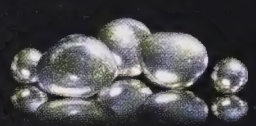

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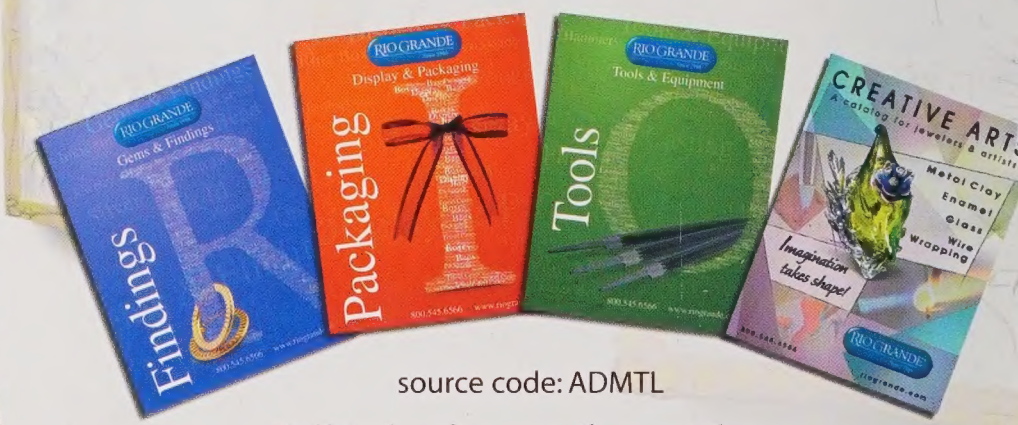

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